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2018 Review 1862

A REVIEW
OF THE
PUBLIC RELATIONS
OF THE
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS,
ITS
DOCTRINES AND DISCIPLINE,
ITS
SCHISMS AND DECLINE,
BY
WILLIAM LOGAN FISHER.

PHILADELPHIA:
MERRIHEW & THOMPSON, PRINTERS,
No. 7 Carter's Alley.
1852.

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PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

I DEDICATE the following review to the individual members of the various divisions of the Society of Friends, and especially to men of independent views, who may be disposed candidly to examine the principles upon which religious societies are founded. I have written it with feelings that would not willingly injure the Society, nor wound the tenderest mind.

I have believed that the great principles of this Society are obscured by a narrow minded sectarianism ; this I have endeavored to demonstrate.

I am fully aware of the wrong motives that have been attributed to those who have had the temerity to express doubts of the utility of their discipline as it now exists, and of the practice under it. Men of foregone conclusions will naturally be disposed to condemn.

In a limited work, it has not been in my power to make extended quotations. If I have given a wrong view of the sentiments of authors, or have drawn wrong inferences from facts, it is through inadvertence or from a want of perception. While there are different meanings attached to the same word, there will be ambiguity. Morality, strictly speaking, applies to the conduct of men to each other, yet, in common language, moral and religious good are often confounded.

I would willingly have avoided any of those designations of the several divisions of the Society of Friends, which they reject, if I had known how else to distinguish them.

Having lately written a small work on the philosophy of

the mind, I have probably, in pursuing the same ideas, used somewhat the same language. I have not deemed it needful to refer to this book in the text, as but few copies were printed. To avoid ambiguity I may say, that I am a member of that portion of the Society that are called Hicksites. Before the division, while I was still an active member, I was much dissatisfied with the harshness and unkindness of the discipline. At the separation I preferred the Hicksites, believing them the more liberal. At a subsequent period I proposed, in the regular form, that the discipline should be modified; the subject was discussed in a Monthly meeting, where I stated my views, when it was decided that the Society was not prepared for the change. From that period, more than ten years ago, I have not attended a Monthly meeting. I have frequently been invited by individuals of the Orthodox Society to resume my seat in their meeting, and by the Hicksites to take part in their proceedings. I have declined all overtures of this kind, not from any unkindness to either party, for I have none; but because, having done my part, I did not wish even tacily to participate in measures which I did not approve. I have felt no regret for the course I have pursued. I have now thought it right to give my sentiments a more permanent form.

I have supposed that there are some minds that will be disposed to examine the views I have expressed. If it be not so, I shall still feel satisfied.

I have considered the subject under the five following heads :

FIRST,—The Society of Friends in its public relations.

SECOND,—Doctrines of Friends.

THIRD,—The Discipline.

FOURTH,—The Schisms.

FIFTH,—Suggestions of the Means of Improvement.

REVIEW.

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS IN ITS PUBLIC RELATIONS.

It requires but a limited knowledge of history to perceive that the principles promulgated by the early Quakers, have had an interesting and important influence on the affairs of the world in the last two hundred years.

We make the following extracts from writers not connected with the Society, confirming this opinion.

"The rise of the people called Quakers," says Bancroft, "is one of the memorable events in the history of man. It marks the moment when intellectual freedom was claimed unconditionally by the people as an inalienable birthright. . . . The principle of the Quakers contained a moral revolution. If it flattered self-love, and fed enthusiasm, it also established absolute freedom of mind, trod every idolatry under foot, and entered the strongest protest against the forms of a hierarchy."

Of Fox, he remarks, "That the simplicity of truth was restored by his means, that his boyish spirit yearned after excellence, and he was haunted by a vague desire of an unknown illimitable good; that his enquiring mind was gently led along to principles of

endless and eternal love ; light dawned upon him, and though the world was rocked by tempests of opinion, his secret and yet unconscious belief was firmly stayed by the anchor of hope ; his soul enjoyed the sweetness of repose, and he came up from the agony of doubt into the paradise of contemplation."

Coleridge, in his *Biographia Literaria*, speaks thus : "One assertion I will venture to make, as suggested by my own experience: that there exist folios on the human understanding, and the nature of man, which would have a far juster claim to their high rank and celebrity, if in the whole huge volume there could be found as much fulness of heart and intellect, as bursts forth in many a simple page of George Fox."

Carlyle, in his *Sartor Resartus*, says of Fox : "This man, the first of the Quakers, and by trade a shoemaker, was one of those to whom, under ruder or purer forms, the divine idea of the Universe is pleased to manifest itself ; and across all the hulls of ignorance and earthly degradation, shine through, in unspeakable awfulness, unspeakable beauty on their souls ; who therefore are rightly accounted prophets, God-possessed, or even Gods, as in some periods it has chanced."

If Diogenes was the greatest man of antiquity, only that he wanted decency, then by stronger reason is George Fox the greatest of the moderns ; and greater than Diogenes himself, for he too stands on the adamantine basis of his manhood, casting aside all props and shoars ; yet not in half savage pride, undervaluing the earth ; valuing it rather as a place to yield him warmth and food, he looks heavenward from his earth, and dwells in an element of mercy and worship

with a still strength, such as the cynic's tub did nowise witness."

"The Journal of George Fox," says Sir James Macintosh, "is one of the most extraordinary and instructive documents in the world, and no man of competent judgment can peruse it without revering the virtue of the author."

We nowhere in history find a record of purer devotion than that of George Fox in his earlier years. His soul was yielded up to the influences of divine good. He was a spiritualist; believed in God, not because he read of him in the Scriptures, but from the immediate operation of truth in his own breast. With a mind greatly freed from every external bias, he perceived that there was an internal principle or moral sense, independent of all outward evidences, and that under its government the whole moral nature of man would become purified, and evil necessarily come to an end. That it was universal and unchangeable, applicable to all men; that it had no connexion with castes or creeds, dogmas, or rituals, and that living under its guidance would necessarily bring man into harmony with all moral and religious intelligence, and introduce him into brotherhood with his fellow man.

Cromwell, it is stated, said to Fox, with a kind of double entendre, shaking him cordially by the hand, "George, come again to my house, for if thou and I were but an hour of a day together, we should be nearer the one to the other."* But George was not enticed by these professions; Cromwell invited him to partake of his

*Fox's Journal, folio, page 138.

hospitality, but George declined ; and Cromwell afterwards said, "now I see there is a people risen and come up that I cannot win either with gifts, honours, offices, or places, but all other sects and people I can."

In their early career the Quakers manifested hostility to corruption in every form in which it could be presented. The conduct of kings and potentates, priests and laymen, professional men and sectarians, received in turn their severe animadversion. Unlimited by sectarian feeling, unawed by authority, they asked justice for all—and for that they contended manfully ; where the rights of man were invaded, there were they found. William Penn's house in England was besieged by Roman Catholics and dissenters, asking his good offices in pleading for their rights. The author of that celebrated work, *Pilgrim's Progress*, was released from a long imprisonment at the intercession of the Quakers. The delicate office of conveying King Charles II. from England to France, was entrusted to two Quakers, one of whom carried him on his shoulders from the boat. True to his principles, he accepted no reward, declaring he did not aid him because he was a king, but because he was a *man* in distress.* They had

*These men were Richard Penderell and Richard Carver, master and mate of the vessel that carried the king away, after the battle of Worcester. They alone were entrusted with the secret. It was Carver, the mate, who carried him on his back. After the king's restoration, Carver went, with other Friends, to ask that four hundred Quakers then in prison, should be released. The king recognized him at once, granted his request and remitted the fines. The patent, with

embassies to Rome, to Jerusalem, to Malta, asking freedom from oppression, and extension to the rights of man. They came to the settlers of New England, who most cruelly oppressed the Antinomians, Baptists, and others, pleading for the repeal of their unrighteous laws.

The trial of William Penn and William Meade at the Old Bailey, for speaking at one of the Quaker meeting houses, is supposed to have done more to shake the corruptions of the British Bench, than any thing that ever occurred. Again and again were the jury sent out by the judge, who threatened to fine them if they did not give a verdict against the prisoners. Penn and his friends manfully maintained their ground, appealing to Magna Charta and to the jury to protect their rights as Englishmen.

After many struggles, a verdict was given in their favor; and for this, in spite of all law, the jurors were fined and imprisoned, while nearly a dozen knights and barons were on the bench in honor of the cause.*

George Fox came to these colonies before William Penn, speaking to the North and South, everywhere, the language of Freedom. In Rhode Island, where a severe law was passed against any who should speak

the names, fills eleven skins of parchment, and is still preserved among the records of the Society in England. The Quakers obtained the insertion of the names of other sufferers for conscience sake; among them that of John Bunyan, who had been twelve years in confinement.—*See Bunyan's life by Southey; also, Whitehead's Works.*

*See account of this trial in the preface to Penn's Folio Works.

in Town Meeting against the payment of taxes, George Fox is represented to have said in the meeting in relation thereto: "Ye are the unworthiest men on earth if you do lose the liberty through which Christ hath made you free in life and glory."* Quaker magistrates were elected the next year and freedom of debate restored.

Several letters were written by the early Quakers to Cromwell, dissuading him from accepting the crown which was then proposed. George Fox says to him, "Oh Oliver keep kingship off thy head, which the world would give thee, and earthly crowns under thy feet, lest with that thou cover thyself, and so lose the power of God.†

It has been remarked by Gordon, in his history of Pennsylvania, that before Beccaria, Montesquieu, and others had written on political economy, William Penn and his friends had practically carried into effect in Pennsylvania the principles they promulgated. Thus they manifested that their pleadings for liberty were the result of elevated views respecting the rights of man.‡

Many of William Penn's confidential letters on governmental affairs are still extant in his own hand writing, in the Logan family. They breathe but one spirit, a desire that the government of the colony, over which he presided, should be conducted on the principles of justice and truth, as manifested in the mind of man.

The laws of Great Britain recognized one hundred

* Bancroft.

† Journal of Fox.

‡ Gordons History of Pennsylvania.

and sixty crimes punishable by death without benefit of clergy. Against this barbarous code the English Quakers remonstrated, but their remonstrance was in vain. Penn received the charter of his colony with the condition that it should be subject to British laws, but no sooner had the Quakers established their government, than they rejected these laws, and accorded the punishment of death only to wilful murder.* Queen Ann refused her assent to this new legislation. The Colonists, however, retained and acted upon their own laws; they were again set aside by British power. In the end, the Quaker views prevailed, and thus Pennsylvania became the pioneer in that mighty change in criminal jurisprudence which has had so important an influence in the civilized world.

The early history of Pennsylvania furnishes one of the best illustrations of the true principles of government that the world has ever afforded, and it was the more striking, in contrast with the bigotted exactions that obtained in the colonies to the North and the South.

This country claims to have placed religious liberty on a permanent basis. So far as this is the case we are indebted to the Quakers; it was they alone who seemed to have any true perception of human rights. This, we think, will be apparent from a careful examination of the ecclesiastical laws that were in force in all the Colonies, except those where the Quaker influence prevailed.

Gordon seriously asks whence William Penn ob-

*See the account of Penitentiary System in this country, published in New York.

tained his superior views of government, and seems altogether unable to answer the question. A late writer on the history of this great man, thinks he has solved the difficulty by ascribing all this mental illumination to his intercourse with Algernon Sidney. Such remarks only betray the ignorance of the writers. The science of government is the science of man, and those only can comprehend the principles of government who understand themselves. The rights of man have their foundation in the divine law, which is not learned from books, but in the recesses of the soul. Hence, the early Quakers, from introversion of mind, illiterate as many of them were, understood as none others of their day understood, the principles of civil and religious liberty.

Penn was the friend of Sidney; though a Quaker preacher, he appeared at the hustings, and otherways took an active part in promoting the elevation of Sidney to a seat in Parliament. He was too wise a man not to be benefitted by any suggestions he might receive from others, yet the principles upon which they acted were wholly different. With Sidney, democracy was an affair of policy, of expediency, of patriotism. Penn's democracy was the natural effect of a deeply rooted religious conviction that there was a divine principle in the mind of man, given to him by the Author of all good, which, as it enabled him to govern himself, was also the first principle in the government of society, and this may be assumed to be the only basis on which democracy can safely be established. But apart from this, there are evidences, not only that Penn made objections to some of Sidney's views on

government, but that it was mutually agreed by him and the Friends who proposed to emigrate, that the Quaker plan of government should be adopted.

One fact would seem to settle this question. The most elevated views respecting government were boldly promulgated by the early Quakers before Penn joined that Society, and probably long before Sidney wrote. In the year 1658, more than twenty years before the settlement of Pennsylvania, we find this declaration : " We believe that every transgression ought to be punished according to its nature, and that the punishment exceed not the greatness of the transgression. We believe that the executors of the law ought to be just men, and ought to be chosen every year or otherwise, by the consent of the people. We believe that all governments and rulers ought to be accountable to the people, and to the next preceding rulers, for all their actions, which may be enquired into upon the occasion, and that the chiefest of the rulers be subject under the law, and punishable by it if they be transgressors, as well as the poorest of the people, and thus true judgment will be brought forth in the earth,* &c. &c." For these sentiments the Quakers were visited with the violence of British wrath, and declared to be unworthy the protection of the law, such views being considered subversive of all government.

The history of the intercourse between the Indians of Pennsylvania and the Quakers, is one of the most extraordinary that the world can furnish. The Indians were called savages from their supposed

* See Eberling's History of Pennsylvania.

† Edward Burrough's Works, folio, page 442.

fierce and vindictive nature. They were described as blood-thirsty and treacherous. In other colonies they were assailed by sanguinary warfare because it was believed no other measures could be maintained with them. Yet a handful of Quakers came among their most powerful tribes, without sword or musket, extended to them the hand of kindness, and received from them all they asked in return, and, during the seventy years that the Quakers held the control of the government of the province, there was uninterrupted peace with the native inhabitants of the land, a circumstance unknown elsewhere. No sooner did the descendants of the Puritans settle in the valley of the Wyoming, than hostilities commenced, and eventually led to dreadful massacres.

The impression made on the Indians by the Quakers, was transmitted from one generation to another, and it has been confirmed, by their espousing their cause and advocating their rights on all proper occasions.

So convinced has the government of the United States been of the influence of the Quakers with the Indians, that upon more than one occasion they have solicited them to take the management of Indian affairs. For a period of nearly half a century, James Logan had the almost exclusive governmental management of the Indians. We extract from a rare book,* a speech of an Indian chief, to shew how highly they appreciated the treatment they had received :

*Collection of Indian Treaties.

“Present, the Governor and Council, July 1, 1742. Canassatego then spoke by an interpreter as follows:

Brethren: we called at our old friend James Logan's, in our way to this city, and to our grief we found him hid in the bushes, and retired, through infirmities, from public business. We pressed him to leave his retirement, and prevailed with him to assist once more at your councils. We hope, notwithstanding his age, and the effects of a fit of sickness which we understand has hurt his constitution, that he may yet continue a long time to assist this province with his counsels. He is a wise man and a fast friend to the Indians, and we desire when his soul goes to God, you may choose in his room just such another person, of the same prudence and ability in counselling, and of the same tender disposition and affection for the Indians. In testimony of our gratitude for all his services, and because he was so good as to leave his country house, and follow us to town, and be at the trouble at this advanced age to attend the council, we present him with this bundle of skins.”

In the year 1751 James Logan died. In the year 1754 the first war between the colony of Pennsylvania and the Indians commenced.

Equally remarkable, though in a more limited degree, were the effects of the principles of peace in Rhode Island.

At a period when one of those desperate wars was carried on with the Indians, other New England colonies, united in a league of defense. Rhode Island, then under the influence of the Quakers, rejected the idea, and while in the colonies thus leagued together one in every twenty of the inhabitants perished, and one family in every twenty was burnt out,

the island of Rhode Island remained safe, and not an inhabitant thereof received personal injury.*

We make the following beautiful extract from a paper written several years before Penn came to this country, by one of the first Quaker settlers in West Jersey. "A providential hand was very visible and remarkable in many instances that might be mentioned, and the Indians were even rendered our benefactors and protectors. Without any carnal weapon we entered the land and inhabited therein, as safe as if there had been thousands of garrisons; for the Most High preserved us from harm both of man and beast."*

These facts demonstrate one truth, that there is a principle of government superior to that of war.

One at least of the governors of North Carolina was a member of the Society of Friends, and brought the Colony to a considerable extent under Quaker influence. It is said that "under his administration this American Canaan flowed with milk and honey." An address of thanks was voted to him, in which it is stated, that the happy change that had taken place was the effect of his wisdom and labor, and that he had "laid the foundation for a most glorious superstructure."*

These are curious events, but we think the steady manly courage exhibited by the early Quakers in their contests with the British crown much more remarkable. They claimed civil and religious liberty, and they obtained it. They asked to be allowed to marry after their own manner; to be exempted from oaths; to

*History of the Society of Friends in America.

be allowed to worship in their own way, which with other privileges were granted them in defiance of all the usages in the British nation. These concessions were not granted without severe conflicts. There were at one period 4000 Quakers in the prisons of England. Many of them were thrust into dark and dismal dungeons, and upwards of one hundred perished there, a sacrifice to their principles. The Quakers would not yield, and the government yielded to them.

The first remonstrance in this country against taxation without representation, which was the primary cause of the American revolution, was made by the Quakers. It is supposed to have been written by Wm. Penn; and is preserved in Smith's History of New Jersey. Though the Quakers did not fight, they were among the most active in endeavors to obtain justice and equal rights from the British crown, by peaceful means.

We make the following extract from a letter of the celebrated Dr. Fothergill, * an eminent Quaker in London, dated 18th of 3d mo. ~~1745~~, shewing the lively interest felt by Friends in England in the establishment of civil and religious liberty in this country.

"I have only time to say before our mutual acquaintance, Dr. Franklin, leaves us, that yesterday Thomas Corbyn, Jacob Hagen, David Barclay, and myself, by direction of the Meeting for Sufferings, presented a petition to the King, entreating that every means might be tried to effect a reconciliation with America without bloodshed. We were favorably received, at least in appearance. Friends here are in-

* This letter was addressed to Wm. Logan. The originals with others of the same character, is in my possession.

general unanimous and anxious for the preservation of the civil and religious liberty of our Friends in America, as on the preservation of theirs, perhaps our own may under Providence depend."

"I shall request Dr. Franklin to get a few of you together. He knows my sentiments fully, and the pains that David Barclay and myself have taken in these affairs. May I speak to thee in confidence, I think, the (ministry) wish to reduce all America to the standard of Quebec and Canada, an abject, slavish people, to be governed solely by the will of the King.

The Quakers supposed that if they had possessed the control of the Government here, the objects sought for would have been attained by peaceable means; it might have been so. It is curious to contemplate the powerful effect of moral courage perseveringly exerted in a righteous cause.

The Quakers who settled in New England were the first assertors in this country of the true principles of both civil and religious liberty. Their views were considered by the sectarians of the day as involving the destruction of all human rights. It was the Quakers who first remonstrated on the wrong of negro slavery. Two documents on the subject are extant, written by Friends more than 160 years ago. The American Quakers were the first to liberate their slaves. The English Quakers were the first to form the association which became the nucleus of that which finally achieved emancipation throughout the British Empire. They are believed to have been the first in England who totally rejected the idea of forced payments for religion.

In the present generation, encouraged by some of

the most eminent men of Europe, they were to be found at the Congresses of Vienna and Verona, pleading for the Waldenses and others who had suffered for their conscientious opinions.

In promulgating their views, the early Friends had a severe task to perform. They were surrounded by bigots and fanatics, who did not understand them, and who misinterpreted their actions; yet they bore themselves bravely in the storm. It would have been easy for them to have obtained the friendship of Cromwell, and of the English monarchs, of the Catholics, the Episcopalians, or the Independents, had they swerved to accommodate their views; but, unmoved by the contending elements around them, they stood manfully for the Truth—condemned them all as builders on sandy foundations, and were persecuted by each as each obtained the sway. The history of the world scarcely furnishes a more elevated heroism than was manifested by them in their devotion to truth.

The early career of the Quakers was exceedingly honorable. It was marked by great strength of character, and has been productive of the most important benefits to the civilized world.

Our statements are due to the truth of history, and particularly so, when, from the supposed success of the system of American government, there is a disposition to claim that other colonies were the pioneers in the great cause of civil and religious liberty, and thus wrest from Friends that credit which is justly their due. Yet there were many marks of decided fanaticism amongst them.

The rise of the Society was at a period peculiar in the British annals. Enthusiasm and fanaticism run riot. It was an age of hypocrisy and cant—called in derision the reign of the saints. There were ranters and mad enthusiasts of all kinds; no society or class of men escaped their influence. Friends suffered in common with others from these disorderly spirits, but it was said by high authority that had it not been for the Quakers, Ranterism would have overrun the land.* The doctrine of Friends is of a nature to encourage enthusiasm; thousands flocked to their meetings, and it seemed as if all the world would become Quakers; some of their eminent preachers were in the army, and George Fox in one of his addresses alluded to the good service Friends had performed as soldiers.

In the first edition of the works of George Fox are two passages, showing that he believed in witchcraft. Wm. Penn says, "several have gone naked into steeple houses, markets and cities, as a sign to the people of their spiritual nakedness;" and he appears to justify them therein.† Edward Burroughs

* Dr. Gell and a person of worldly quality told Wm. Penn that, had not the Quakers come, the Ranters would have overrun the nation.—*Penn's Works*.

† Wm. Penn's words are, "we deny not but several have been moved of the Lord to go naked into steeple houses, markets and cities, for a sign to the people, but more especially to the priests, of the nakedness of their spiritual condition; and as stript as they were of their clothes, would the Lord strip them of their deceitful garments." The same thing occurred in New England, where two or three persons stript themselves as a sign of the nakedness of the people.

speaks approvingly of a tailor taking possession of a pulpit on a First-day morning, and being there at work when the preacher came to occupy it. Robert Barclay walked through Edinburg clothed in sack-cloth and covered with ashes. Fox walked barefoot through the city of Litchfield, repeating again and again, "wo unto the bloody city of Litchfield." Fox was called by some of his associates the "Son of Righteousness," and his friends "Kings, Princes and Prophets." A letter from Mary Fisher, still extant, is directed to "George Fox, the deliverer."

There were other eccentricities of the same kind, but we have seen nothing in them to invalidate the character of the early Quakers. That they were enthusiastic, there is no doubt; and this was often carried to excess. There are marks enough that they were not perfect; this they did not claim. They were pioneers in a great cause, without clearly comprehending at all times the strength of their own position.

Yet withal, these eccentricities were not so great as those of some other religious denominations; witness the Anabaptists of Munster.

In order to understand these things, we must recur to the particular excitement of the period. The Quakers were goaded on to desperation by the cruelties that were heaped upon them, and in this way a religious frenzy was brought about which weak minds were not able to withstand. The whole British atmosphere at that period was tainted with cant and fanaticism. This was carried so far that it was deemed

wrong to give children any names but those derived from the Scriptures.*

Neither do we pretend to say that the early proceedings of the Quakers in Pennsylvania were perfect; that certainly was not the case; perfection is not likely to be arrived at by men who are not themselves perfect.

There were various causes of disturbance to the early colony. Its form of government was comparatively new; the peculiar Quaker features of it were deemed highly objectionable to those not of that Society. Serious complaints were made to the British Government, representing that it was murder to hang a man on the verdict of a jury sitting under an affirmation instead of an oath, which the British law required. The pecuniary embarrassments of William Penn, led to party views respecting his Governmental and Proprietary rights.

It has often been asserted that liberty of conscience prevailed in Maryland, settled by the Roman Catholics, and in Rhode Island, settled by the Baptists.

A broad public declaration in favor of liberty of conscience was made by Lord Baltimore, honorable

* The name of the Speaker of the Long Parliament was "Praise God Barebones." The names of a jury in Sussex are thus given in Broome's Travels:

Accepted Trevor,	Return Spelman,
Redeemed Compton,	Be-Faithful Joiner,
Faint-not Hewit,	Fly-Debate Roberts,
Make-Peace Heaton,	Fight-the-good-Fight-of Faith White,
God-Reward Smart,	More-Fruit Fowler,
Hope-for Bending,	Stand-fast-on-High Stringer,
Earth Adams,	Graceful Herding,
Called Lower,	Weep-not Billing,
Kill-Sin Pimple,	Meek Brewer,

alike to himself and his Catholic allies ; it was, however, never fully carried into effect. William Penn had conferences with Lord Baltimore upon the subject ; he promised to adopt measures to relieve the Quaker population, which he failed to fulfil. They afterwards presented a petition, in which they say, "nor are our sufferings like to terminate in our own persons, but also extend to the ruining of our wives and children." The assembly decided favorably. An act was passed by the two Houses for the relief of the Quakers ; Lord Baltimore refused to sign it, and it was not for more than half a century after the colony was settled, that liberty of conscience was established.*

Many acts impairing liberty of conscience occurred under the administration of Roger Williams and the Baptists of Rhode Island. Williams wrote in favor of this liberty, so did King Charles and many others, without understanding it. It may be sufficient to advert to one fact, which is conclusive on the subject. On the 1st of March, 1663, a law was passed, which continued in force until the period of the American Revolution, which excluded Roman Catholics from being admitted as freemen in the Colony.†

In New York, beside other acts of intolerance, the Roman Catholics were banished from the Colony under the pain of perpetual imprisonment,‡ and, if we mistake not, one priest suffered the extreme penalty of the law.

* History of Society of Friends in America.

† Holmes's Annals.

‡ History of New York.

In East Jersey, settled by the Calvinists, liberty of conscience was denied to the Papists. In the Carolinas and Georgia, there were also disabilities against particular classes of men.

The laws of the New England colonies have been already adverted to ; those of Virginia were equally intolerant, and they continued in full force upwards of one hundred years. "If no execution," says Jefferson, "took place there, it was not owing to the moderation of the church or the spirit of the Legislature."*

The public career of the Quakers admits of many interesting illustrations which it is not consistent with the design of these pages to enlarge upon. When they spoke of the light of truth in the mind as the true governing principle of man, they proclaimed the democratic element on which the government of these States is founded. The world seems astonished at its success. If we could suppose this individual principle would cease to operate, or operating should be disregarded, then democratic governments would prove a failure.

The principles of the American government are inherent in the doctrine of individualism, which is the foundation on which the Quakers build. Men fight for what they call freedom. It is consistent with their present state that they should do so ; yet what they really claim is the right of each to judge for himself by that evidence of truth which is only found in individual minds.

History records eleven battles, several of which

* Jefferson's Notes on Virginia.

occurred before the Christian era, which permanently influenced the destinies of the human race. Here is a peaceful event; the rise of a small society openly proclaiming the democratic principle, and practically illustrating its applicability to government, which already has, and is, we believe, destined yet to exert a greater influence on mankind than either of these sanguinary conflicts, or probably than all of them combined.

With these views we have no hesitation in ascribing to the Quakers a greater influence in establishing the liberties of this country and the system of equal rights, than to the patriots of the American Revolution; these latter but carried out ideas familiar to the minds of the people. It was among the Quakers that many of these ideas originated. Bancroft says, "this is the praise of William Penn, that in an age which had seen a popular revolution shipwreck popular liberty, among selfish factions; which had seen Hugh Peters and Henry Vane perish by the hangman's cord and the axe; in an age when Sidney nourished the pride of patriotism rather than the sentiment of philanthropy; when Russel stood for the liberties of his order, and not for new enfranchisements; and Shaftsbury and Locke thought government should rest on property—Penn did not despair of humanity, and though all history and experience denied the sovereignty of the people, dared to cherish the noble idea of man's capacity for self government. * * * There is nothing in the history of the human race like the confidence which the simple virtues and institutions of William Penn inspired. Penn never gave counsel at variance with popular

rights. * * * England to-day confesses his sagacity, and is doing honor to his genius. He came too soon for success, and he was aware of it. After more than a century, the laws which he reprovod began gradually to be repealed; and the principle which he developed, sure of immortality, is slowly, but firmly, asserting its power over the Legislature of Great Britain. * * * * Every charge of hypocrisy, of selfishness, of vanity, of dissimulation, of credulous confidence; every form of reproach from virulent abuse to cold apology; every ill name from Tory and Jesuit, to Blasphemer and Infidel, has been used against Penn; but the candor of his character, always triumphed over calumny. His fame is now wide as the world; he is one of the few who have gained abiding glory.”*

Penn was but the embodiment of the Quaker idea. Democracy is not inevitably a good. Free government is an evil if it rests upon the passions and prejudices of men. In such a case one despot is better than a thousand, because he has less power for evil. The Quaker idea was that democracy is a consequence of virtue, not its cause.

Friends cast off at once from the prevalent Calvinistic doctrine of the inherent depravity of man, and confiding in individual illumination, they allied themselves with what they believed to be the great principles of human nature as manifested in their own minds. This will be found to be the secret of all greatness of mind of all true philosophy. It is this that makes a man a man, and not an automaton. It is a philosophical

*History of the United States.

truth applicable to all times and to all countries, that man, to understand the rights of others, must first comprehend his own.

Whenever Friends acted upon the broad principles of Christian philanthropy, their works have manifested enlarged views of human nature. When, in their meeting capacity, they have been surrounded by prescriptions and laws formed by past generations, they have descended to the level of sectarians, and became narrow minded and severe. It is for us to mark the contrast; we shall endeavor to do so with strict impartiality, and to trace as far as is in our power, the causes of the present declining state of the Society, and the schisms and contentions that are manifest therein.

DOCTRINE OF FRIENDS.

The Doctrines of men are always interesting, because it is probable no man entertains wrong opinions, who is not in some degree, injured thereby. They seem, however, to have very little relation to our true religious character. We may assume it to be an unchangeable truth, that the justice of God in making man accountable for his conduct in life, has not left the principles by which he ought to be governed to be the sport of chance. All our knowledge and perceptions indicate that throughout the human family, there are fixed and permanent ideas, in the fulfilment of which is comprised all the duties of man.

There are doctrines in abundance which are deemed essential by particular classes of men. They may increase or retard our comfort or happiness here, but they appear to be wholly unessential to a religious life.

The principles of men may properly be divided into Paganism, which is materialism ; and Christianity, which is spiritualism ; and they are so intermixed, that it may be questioned in which family of man each prevails most. Nay, they appear to be intermingled in individual minds in every variety and possible degree. Men speak of the legal and gospel dispensation ; they are but figures of speech, which mean the same thing. They prevail now as they ever prevailed, rather in individual minds than in periods of time.

In a late address from the Orthodox Society of Quakers in Philadelphia, there is this sentiment, "The Society of Friends is a unit, holding certain doctrines and maintaining certain testimonies, fixed and settled ; plain and easily understood by its members." Herein is exemplified one fact, that from preconceived opinions men become unable to understand truth. The Society of Friends is not a unit, it does not hold certain testimonies that are fixed and settled, or that are plain and easily understood by its members.

To incorporate into a moral system, with a progressive Society, testimonies that are fixed and settled, is to attach to it the seeds of its own decay and final dissolution.

The revolutions which take place in nations and sects, have generally their origin in the depths of the human mind. Those that occurred in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, are directly to be traced to the yearnings of the heart after freedom ;

to the endeavor to throw off those fixed doctrines that had been settled upon them. As these were abolished and others of a permanent character took their place, they formed successively the seeds of fresh convulsions and revolutions.

It has been the profession of the members of the Society of Friends, that it has no established creed. The existence of an organized society implies a government, but not necessarily, a creed, in the usual acceptation of the term. The admission of liberty of conscience, and the right of private judgment, is in direct opposition to that character of fixed faith which a creed implies, and the attempt to form one is a contradiction in the organization of the Society of Friends, and has led to great embarrassment. Instead of written articles in which there would have been no ambiguity, the members of the Society are advised to seek for a standard of faith in the writings of early Quakers.

These contain no such standard, one man writes in one way, another in another; nay, the same individual writes differently at different times.

If we seek to sustain Trinitarian or Unitarian doctrines, the fallibility or infallibility of the Scriptures, the efficacy and necessity of the death of Christ, as a means of salvation, or the sufficiency of the grace of God in the soul for these purposes, abundant authority for each may be found in the Quaker writings, almost as plainly set forth as language can make it. One calls Christ our Elder Brother; another, our Lord and Master.

Not only is their language different on different

occasions, but the natural deductions from principles which they considered unalterable, were in direct contradiction to points of doctrine which they attempted to establish. They were continually reproached with being deists. They denied this charge and asserted plain, unequivocal Trinitarian doctrine, yet they rejected the term Trinity, not because of its unsuitableness, but because it was not found in the Scriptures.

A belief in the sufficiency of the grace of God in the soul as a means of salvation, is abundantly testified of in the writings of the early Quakers. The preaching of this doctrine by them electrified Great Britain, and, in despite of all opposition, thousands and tens of thousands flocked to them, operated upon by a power and enthusiasm that seemed to know no limits.

This is plain doctrine, easily understood, but there has been added to it so many ambiguities, contradictions, explanations and evasions, that we think no rational mind can decide from their writings what the real belief of the Society is on this first and important article of their faith.

Probably no Society of so limited an extent, has furnished such an abundance of expositions, commentaries and explanations of faith and doctrine as that of the Quakers. The catalogue of their works printed in the year 1708, amounted to upwards of four thousand. It was estimated that an average of one thousand copies of each was published, making an aggregate of four millions of books.

Their opponents were not idle. One man alone, formerly a member among them, issued upwards of

eighty separate essays, in opposition to them.* Many other publications, opposing and condemning them, were made. Most of these produced replies and rejoinders, under the authority of the ministers and elders of the Society. Upwards of fifty pages of "Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History" are occupied in refutation of a few observations made by the author, which were considered by Friends unjust to the Society.

If we add to this catalogue the innumerable works that have been printed since that period, we shall have an array of Quaker publications to an extent little suspected by the general readers of the Society. It is doubtful whether among them all there is to be found one plain unprejudiced exposition of Quakerism. The reason is obvious: the earliest writings of Friends were from the spontaneous movements of earnest and sincere minds. They were not uniform—often marked by fanaticism. When the Society became organized, uniformity was deemed essential. A censorship of the press was established, which often expunged material passages, and changed others to suit the feelings of the age; hence they became sectarian. If there was a sentiment in them different from the standard set up, it has been the invariable practice either to suppress the work altogether, or to expunge the objectionable parts. No comment or criticism on the imperfections of the Society or system was ever allowed to be printed by a member, while the repre-

*This was Francis Bugg. He states that he voluntarily relinquished his membership, but he was disowned for publishing some of these works, and he was afterwards employed by the bishops to traduce the Quakers. Those of his writings which I have seen are exceedingly scurrilous.

sentations of their opponents were often made in an unfair spirit, and were not to be relied on.

The doctrines of the Society, in its early days, were decidedly in advance of all others in the Christian world. Those of other societies, have, in some degree, approached them, and Friends have, in some instances, retrograded, so that the contrast is not now so great as formerly, yet we have no hesitation in saying that the Quaker doctrines, as a whole, are still in advance of those of any other society. Whatever defects there may be in them, and however feebly they may be carried out, we consider that they have their foundation in those principles which must ultimately prevail in the world.

Yet, the Society has not escaped the influence of Paganism. In considering their doctrines, we shall first advert to their spirituality, in which all their strength consisted; and second, to their materiality, as manifested in their dependence upon outward or physical things.

The leading doctrine of the society is that of the universality and sufficiency of the Grace of God in the mind of man, as the means of perfecting his moral and religious character.

In an address of the early Quakers, of "Things pertaining to Religion," proposed to the "Royal Society," they thus explain themselves:

"Observe the difference between the religion which God hath taught us, and led us into, and the religion of all men upon earth besides. Our religion stands wholly out of that which all their religion stands in. Their religion stands in a scriptural relation; but our religion stands in a principle, wherein the Spirit of

light appeareth, where we hear the voice, and see the express image of the Heavenly One, (even God himself,) and we know things, not from an outward relation, but from their inward nature, virtue and power. Yea, here we must profess we so know things that we are fully satisfied about them, and could not doubt concerning them, though there had never been a word of Scripture wrote."

Isaac Pennington uses almost verbatim the same language. "Our religion," he says, "stands wholly out of that which their religion stands in. Our religion stands in a principle which changes the mind, and we so know things, and could not doubt concerning them, though there had never been a word or letter written of them."*

The same views are abundantly spoken of by other writers among early Friends, though often more diffusely, yet entirely sufficient to establish the fact that the Quaker faith was considered to rest on a principle independent of outward circumstances. Above all, it is the inevitable deduction from premises that were freely granted. The idea was thus exemplified by Edward Burroughs. In answer to a question as to who had embraced the Quaker doctrine, he says:

"David was holy, Moses was holy, Jeremiah was holy, with many more testified in the Scripture that were of the same faith with us, and of the same doctrines, and principles, and practices; for themselves were Quakers, as their own writings make manifest."†

* Pennington's works, part 2d, page 54.

† Burrough's works, page 165.

If Quakerism is a principle, as declared by Pennington and others, then also is christianity a principle, or Quakerism is not Christianity. Friends believe both parts of the proposition, and herein is a beautiful and broad ground of truth, worthy of all acceptance. We consider it to be a doctrine that stands upon an immutable basis that nothing can change. And that all the additions and explanations which Friends give to it, are in their nature untrue, and calculated to do harm. A subject so interesting should be examined free from sectarian bias, or prejudice of any kind.

The faculties of men are two fold; first, those relating to the outward senses.

Second, those that are purely intellectual.

It admits of demonstration that the existence of material or physical things are made known to the mind through material means alone, unless from miraculous interference, of which we know nothing. The eye sees, the ear hears, and we have taste, &c., each possessing physical mediums of their own nature by which impressions are conveyed to the mind of the objects which they recognize. These mediums, which are called nerves, are well understood by anatomists—so far as they are destroyed, sensation ceases. The eye may appear perfect, but unless it has its appropriate nerve there can be no vision. We see a tree or hear a voice, and their existence is demonstrated through means adapted by an all wise Providence to the end designed. Of this character are all historical truths; we believe them on the evidence of the senses, and our belief in them may be destroyed in the same way when stronger evidence comes to contradict them.

There is another class of faculties, which may be called intellectual, as far as we can judge, wholly independent of the outward senses. The distinction between each is clearly marked. It is through these intellectual faculties, that man comes to know himself and to have a knowledge of his own existence. The most acute philosophers and metaphysicians have come to the conclusion, that there is a self-consciousness that can be traced to no other source than intuitive perception. The more this subject is examined into, by candid and serious minds, the more firm we think will be the conviction that all the knowledge we can desire upon intellectual subjects is received intuitively by the operations of the mind itself, by powers which it holds independent of the outward senses, and which are in their nature eternal. These faculties are a sense of love, of beauty, of truth, of harmony, and the like. We have reason to believe that they are received into the mind by spiritual mediums adapted to their own nature. Unlike those of the senses, no power of the anatomist has ever discovered any nerves or outward means of communicating with them; being intellectual, they partake of the character of the mind itself, and receive their impressions through an influence independent of the material senses. If we admit the idea of a self consciousness which has not its origin in material things, we admit the reality of Divine Revelation. If it be admitted that there is but one source of virtue, and that man can receive no knowledge of it except intuitively, it must also be admitted as a necessary consequence, that the whole strength of our religious character is derived from that source alone.

We may read of virtue, and be familiar with the best works on truth and religion, and listen to the best sermons; but unless there are corresponding feelings within us, they are utterly void as respects us.

We lay it down as an axiom, on which we found our argument, that every religious truth comes from the immediate revelation of God.

What we hear or read may give new turns to our thoughts, may awaken the mind to its own consciousness, but the centre, the foundation, must first be laid by the power of the Most High, or all words are vain. This divine influence may with great propriety be called the revelation of God, the proper source of all true philosophy and vital religion. It may be called the moral sense, the light of truth, or by any other name that may serve to designate a purely spiritual or intellectual faculty. It is immediately, as we believe, through this influence, that all true instruction of an intellectual nature comes. The eyes of the brute creation may be as competent to behold a fine river, or a beautiful sunset as our own, but if they have no sense of beauty, they cannot partake of that enjoyment which those objects awaken in the minds of intellectual beings. Thus we suppose they can have no knowledge of truth, harmony, &c., and herein is demonstrated the true character of man. One outward, partaking of the animal nature. The other spiritual, partaking of the nature of the divine mind.

We think it admits of the most indubitable proof, that the intellectual powers in others, are only comprehended by like powers in ourselves.

This is one of the most beautiful ideas connected with moral philosophy, and with vital religion. Just

in proportion as the mind cultivates and understands its own intellectual faculties, it comprehends them in others. Evil and good are recognised in others by the same influence in ourselves, and there is reason to believe that a mind wholly pure could have no conception of evil, or that one wholly malevolent (could such a mind exist) would have no conception of virtue.

James Naylor, one of the early Quakers, near the close of his life, thus illustrates this idea.

“There is a spirit which I feel that delights to do no evil, nor to revenge any wrong, but delights to endure all things in the hope to enjoy its own in the end. Its hope is to outlive all wrath and contention, and to weary out all exaltation and cruelty, or whatever is of a nature contrary to itself. It sees to the end of all temptations ; as it bears no evil in itself, so it conceives none in thought to any other. If it be betrayed, it bears it ; for its ground and spring is the mercies and forgiveness of God. Its crown is meekness, its life is everlasting love unfeigned, and it takes its kingdom with entreaty and not with contention, and keeps it by lowliness of mind. In God alone it can rejoice, though none else can regard it, or can own its life. It is conceived in sorrow and brought forth without any to pity it ; nor doth it murmur at grief and oppression. It never rejoiceth but through suffering ; for with the world’s joy it is murdered. I found it alone, being forsaken ; I have fellowship therein with them who lived in dens and desolate places in the earth, who through death obtained this resurrection and eternal holy life.”

These poetic expressions are perhaps not exceeded for beauty and sublimity in the whole compass of

English literature. They portray in unmistakable language not only the union of a pure mind with the divine harmony, but also that there is a state which, as it "*bears no evil in itself, conceives none in thought to any other.*"

The idea that man can comprehend intellectual truths in others only through the medium of the like intellectual truth in his own mind, is fully exemplified by ecclesiastical writers, though many of them are so limited in their views, as to apply it only to the Scriptures. If true at all, it is universally so. True philosophy is divine wisdom; what is sound in the one case, is equally so in the other. Luther says, "the Scriptures are to be understood but by that very spirit by which they were writ."* Erasmus: "What man sets forth by man's device, may be received by man's wit, but the things that are set forth by the Holy Ghost, requireth an interpreter inspired with a like spirit." William Penn and all the early Friends use similar language; "the spirit of truth must be the rule for our believing and understanding the Scriptures."†

These observations apply only to the intellectual character of the Scriptures, to the spiritual truths contained therein. There are certain marked features in the character of man, which must be referred to a higher principle, more equable and just than can be derived from education and tradition, be that what it may. It is found among the Esquimaux of the North, and the Hottentots of the South; among untutored savages, and civilized men. The deaf and the dumb,

* Luther, 3d vol., folio, 169.

† Penn's Works, 1st. vol, 599.

and those who have added to these infirmities the want of sight, are found to possess a vital intellectual energy, a strong sense of justice and right, that can be referred to no other source than a communion with the Divine mind.

In a report of the managers of a benevolent institution in Philadelphia the present year, we find the following: "It gives us great pleasure to say, that after laboring for three years and a half among those who have been considered the most hardened, the most degraded, and certainly the most hopeless part of the community, that we have never yet met with one who was utterly abandoned to evil. However sunk and depraved they may be, however little consciousness they may possess of the original divinity of their natures, yet the Almighty still keeps one spark alive in their bosoms, which may be recognized even in their lowest condition."

This report, written for no party purpose, but simply as a statement of truth, manifests the omnipresence of a power in the mind which we believe is ever seeking its own nature.

It was a remarkable hallucination of Locke, the sceptic Hobbes, and all others of that school, and it has been followed by all traditionary Christians, that man can obtain the knowledge of intellectual truths through reflection, and the association of ideas received through the senses. They have thus built up a superstructure without any solid foundation.

Man cannot reflect unless he has ideas to reflect upon, and ideas or perceptions of intellectual truth cannot be conveyed to the mind through outward mediums. Just so far as the Society of Friends have

adopted the ideas of Locke, they have departed from their spiritual faith.

Friends rest their evidence of Divine Revelation, first, on individual consciousness; next on the Scriptures. We have endeavored to show that it is also a philosophical truth which no sophistry can change, no human ingenuity can evade. Some of them adopted, at times, almost in its full sense, the beautiful scripture doctrine of sonship. "All who are led by the spirit of God are sons of God." In Fox's trial at Lancaster he said, "The saints are all one in the Father and the Son; they are of his bone and his flesh." In one of his addresses to Oliver Cromwell, Fox says, "I am moved to give this forth for the truth's sake from him whom the world calls George Fox, who is the son of God."* This passage has been greatly objected to as blasphemous. We see nothing blasphemous in it. It is the same kind of blasphemy which every one adopts, who says, "our Father who art in Heaven;" it is the blasphemy (if they will have this revolting name) of the New Testament.

George Fox, the younger, says: "I, the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, am the true eternal God; by me all things are apparent."†

Crane, one of the early Quakers, speaking of worship uses this emphatic language: "God praises God;

*See Leslie's Ecclesiastical History. Also, Encyclopedia Britannica. There was a lame attempt by the English Quakers to show that this extract was not true. We consider it rests on unquestionable evidence, and is in harmony with other sentiments of Fox, or we would not quote it.

† See this passage as explained and quoted by Penn, 2d vol. 295.

his praise and worship forever is from Thee unto Thee." He adds, "If you cannot read this, let your mouths be stopped forever;"* corresponding with the Scripture passage, "the spirit itself maketh intercession for us."

The same form of expression was often used by James Naylor, and may be found in the account of his trial for blasphemy in the English State Trials. He rejected and disclaimed altogether the adulations which were bestowed on him by silly persons, but I am not aware that he ever denied the doctrines which he preached, and surely he had no occasion to do so. Many of his sentiments as displayed on that trial are exceedingly beautiful. In answer to a question he says, "Where God is manifested in the flesh, there is the everlasting Son of Righteousness;" and being asked twice whether God was manifested in him, answered both times, "I have no kingdom in this world, yet a kingdom I have, and he that hath redeemed me, hath redeemed me to be king for ever;" yet avowing again and again that it was not he, a poor weak man. "As a creature," he says, "I deny any such thing." "It is not I, but the divine mind that is manifested in me." "I do abhor that any of that honor which is due to God, should be given to me as a creature."† and thus said Fox and the Friends who wrote in this way.

* Account of Babylon's Merchants, by Richard Crane.

† The works of James Naylor would be extremely interesting, could we see them as they were originally written. With all his foibles, he seems to have been an eminently enlightened man. As they were republished by the Yearly Meeting of London, in 1716, they are of very little value.

The American Quakers, at the time of the schism of George Keith—and among them was the estimable deputy Governor Thomas Lloyd—openly avowed in meeting; that they knew of no Christ Jesus as a mediator in Heaven without them, but the grace of God within them.*

Job Scott, one of the most eminently devoted Quakers of the last century, thus writes:

“If I knew Christ no otherwise than they (the professors) teach, describe and declare him, I think I must be either a skeptic or deist. I can never see the connection between the sufferings of a body of flesh seventeen or eighteen hundred years ago, and the salvation [of an immortal soul at this day. I think the systems by some promulgated, for the gospel of salvation by Jesus, as full fraught with absurdity as almost anything I have met with in Mahometanism, or in the ancient mythology of the heathen.” He elsewhere says: “I would as soon trust my immortal state in the profession of deism, as upon the common notion of salvation by Christ.” Regarding his own faith on this subject he says: “This is the great mystery of godliness—God manifest in the flesh, is not confined to the flesh of that one body.”†

George Fox said in an address to Cromwell: “My weapons are not carnal but spiritual, and my kingdom is not of this world, therefore with carnal weapons I do not fight.” In his Battledore he says: “All language is to me no more than dust, who was before language was.” Again, in his “News from the North:” “Jesus Christ is the door that all must pass through,

* Works of George Keith.

† Journal of Job Scott—Salvation by Christ.

and he is the porter that opens the door. I am the door that ever was, the same Christ, yesterday, to-day and forever."

Wm. Penn in his address to the Protestants asks, "what is Christ but meekness, justice, mercy, patience, and virtue in perfection?"

I desire calmly but seriously to consider this doctrine. If it be not true, then the whole ground taken respecting the Scriptures, that they can only be understood by the same spirit that gave them forth, to which we have before alluded, is also untrue. We believe both to be true; that man can only understand the divine spirit in another, by the same spirit in himself, and this by an unchangeable law of our moral being. Man knows Christ to be the Son of God, by knowing himself to be such—each in degree as his mind is prepared therefor. There is no mystery in this doctrine; every one practically believes in it, in proportion as he is under the influence of the Divine Spirit. It is by sympathy that men are able to comprehend each other. Even the vicious and depraved, if such there be, call to their fellows and sympathize with each other in their mutual depravity.

This doctrine is in accordance with that of Pennington, that Quakerism is a principle, and the necessarily corresponding proposition that vital Christianity is also a principle. Thus Christ himself said, "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me but on him that sent me." Thus also is understood those beautiful expressions, "I and my Father are one;" "he that seeth me seeth him that sent me." "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

The great idea was, that the true Christ "is the Power of God and the Wisdom of God," and that it is his spirit, or rather the spirit of the divine mind, that is the true Saviour, and that the death of Jesus on the cross is an historical fact, having no essential reference to us; that Christianity is a principle to be realized and experienced in the mind, and not to be learned from a book. That it is not a written code, and that, though Christ may be spoken of as its representative, yet it has no necessary connexion with the flesh and blood of Jesus of Nazareth, but that the real Christ is the *Logos* or indwelling word; that it had not its origin at the commencement of the Christian era, but was from the beginning; that all men have ever participated in its benefits in proportion as they are redeemed; that the gospel has nothing to do with the book that bears that name, but is the power of God; and that, through the influence of this power, men are saved from their sins, and not by natural blood shed on the cross."

The extracts we have given express the spiritual doctrine of individual Friends. To each mind that embraces and understands them, they are in themselves a unit. There is no contradiction in them, no jar, no discord. Carried out to their legitimate extent, they comprise the perfection of the Christian doctrine. They are in their nature calculated to destroy all deism and scepticism, as those words are understood. Restore Christianity to its natural beauty, and it may defy scepticism. The Quaker doctrines, as we have said before, embrace two as-

pects; men believe in one or the other, according to their state of mind.

We are not aware that there is any writer among the early Quakers, who touched on the doctrines of the Society, that is consistent. We do not mean consistent with our opinion, but consistent with himself. They all contradict themselves again and again, not in words alone, but by laying down propositions, which, when carried out, destroy at once all the superstructure.

We have quoted William Penn speaking of Christ as a principle. On another occasion he writes thus: "The Quakers believe that Christ is God, and that Christ is man; that he came in the flesh, died, rose again, ascended and sits on God's right hand, the only sacrifice and mediator for man's happiness."*

George Fox, after writing beautifully on spiritual religion, thus speaks in his Great Mystery: "Christ gave himself, his body, for the life of the whole world, and paid the debt, and made satisfaction; and doth enlighten every man that comes into the world, that all through him might believe, and he that doth not believe in the offering is condemned already."

Again, from an epistle drawn up by George Fox and Ellis Hookes, clerk of the Yearly Meeting of London: "Christ Jesus, the Emanuel, God with us; whom all the angels must worship. Christ offered himself through the Eternal Spirit, without spot to God; and by his blood purges our consciences from dead works to serve the living God, and so we

*Penn's Works, vol. 2, p. 739, 1692.

know that Christ by one offering, hath forever perfected them that are sanctified."

These Trinitarian views abound in the Quaker writings, and read by themselves they would lead the mind to the belief that those Friends were Trinitarians. Yet it is apparent that they were all the effect of deference to the authority of the ancient fathers, whom, through preconceived opinions, they were bound to reverence, and whose sentiments they deemed it presumptuous to call in question. Always beneath this materialism of the Trinity we find underlaying the doctrine of spiritualism. Their spontaneous feelings are deeply marked with it, and often expressed with much power. William Penn was imprisoned in the Tower on this ground. When requested to retract with a view to his release, and he was told that the Bishop of London was resolved he should either publicly recant or die a prisoner, he made this reply: "All is well; I wish they had told me so before, since the expecting of a release put a stop to some business. Thou mayest tell my father, who I know will ask thee, these words: That my prison shall be my grave before I will budge a jot; for I owe my conscience to no mortal man; I have no need to fear, God will make amends for all. They are mistaken in me; I value not their threats nor resolutions; for they shall know I can weary out their malice and peevishness; and in me they shall behold a resolution above fear."

Yet after these manly sentiments, he made a weak defence, or did, in fact, retract, in his work entitled "Innocency with her open face."

The Quakers in England appear to be carrying out

the Pagan or material doctrine of Friends to its legitimate issue. One of the epistles from London for the present year, speaks of the "written revelation of God," and similar expressions have become common among the English Quakers. Thus in "Portable Evidence of Christianity," there are these words: "the moral law as revealed in Scripture;" "the Bible, which alone fully reveals the nature and character of sin;" "it is in the Scriptures only that the attributes of our Heavenly Father are fully made known to us," with many other similar sentiments, evidently showing that the English Quakers are yielding their minds to that benumbing influence that instituted tithes and church rates, and that still supports them. If we may receive revelation through the medium of written words, we may receive it also by spoken words. This makes revelation an affair of barter, to be bought and sold in the shambles. We hold it to be a contradiction utterly impossible in the nature of man.

The English Quakers openly maintain the orthodox views respecting the doctrine of Christ, in these words: "Behold the glorious partner of the Father's throne, fully opening his bosom to the vials of his wrath, groaning and bleeding on the cross, in the nature of man, and bearing in his own body on the tree, the penalty of the sins of mankind." Again, "Let us call to mind that in that hour of unutterable desertion, the righteous vengeance of God against a guilty world was poured forth upon the innocent substitute."*

*Treatise on Love to God, pages 40 and 45.

Others of them have gone so far as to object to the old Quaker doctrine respecting the light of truth manifested in all men. Hence they say, that "they cannot regard the term light as applying to a spiritual principle, and that the Scriptures are the appointed source of that truth that was taught by Christ and his apostles."*

We are told that this is philosophy. We desire that they would work out these problems, and show its consistency and harmony with those unchangeable principles in which alone truth is to be found. We would cheerfully do so, but we think their doctrine has no foundation to rest upon, beyond the ipse dixit of men, transmitted from generation to generation, but having no ulterior support. We would also analyze the doctrine set forth in Evan's Exposition, as we have endeavored to do the doctrine of spiritualism, but though conveyed in language with which we are more familiar than that of the English Quakers, it is yet essentially and in substance the same. Each assumes for facts, and teaches for truth, and claims implicit belief for things entirely beyond our comprehension in this state of existence; and which, in our view, it is great presumption to attempt to decide upon.

We make the following extract from the life of Elizabeth Fry, to show that there was at least one Guernseyite Quaker, who, though she estimated the Scriptures in a way that never was assented to by ancient Friends, was in reality a spiritualist; her

*See "An Enquiry into some parts of Christian Doctrine, having relation to the Society of Friends," pages 233, 276.

daughter says of her: "Her highest power was unquestionably derived from the knowledge she had obtained of the heart of man, greatly if not chiefly from the knowledge the study of her own, its feelings, and tendencies." This is spiritualism, in its full force and efficacy, and it was through this means that she was able to accomplish the great work to which she was called, and thus we have reason to believe that many with these outward views of christianity are yet spiritualists. This is that under current of vital truth of which we have spoken, which is the source of true philosophy, and of every principle connected with the permanent happiness of man.

If we adopt any standard of faith, which the American Quakers have deemed correct, it would lead to the conclusion that Friends in England were of all others, who ever claimed the name of Quakers, the least sound—nay, we should say that as they deny the fundamental doctrines of Quakerism, they are not Quakers.

We do not individually adopt any such standard. The English Quakers have of course a perfect right to hold such faith or doctrine as they think proper, with which no discipline has a right to interfere, and this will be acknowledged, whenever the American Orthodox Friends, who object so much to it, shall fully admit that christianity consists in practical righteousness and not in speculative opinions. Our own impression is that to compare their doctrine with Paganism would be to disgrace Paganism. That it is even more degrading than Atheism itself, but it does not thence follow but that those who entertain such views may be amiable and estimable men.

The Scriptures.—We have already adverted to Friend's doctrine respecting the Scriptures. It is this: that the precepts contained in them are "to be believed only as they correspond with the eternal precepts of the spirit in men's minds."*

No persons of their day made stronger objections to the idolatry of the Scriptures, than the early Quakers. Samuel Fisher, the cotemporary and friend of Fox, and the most learned biblical critic that has appeared in the Society, wrote several hundred folio pages, to prove the "woful corruptions, the barbarisms, the errors arising from transpositions, translations, and transcriptions, the flat falsities, the innumerable faults which they contain." Not only the Hebrew, but the Septuagint, the Arabic, the Samaritan, the Chaldee, the Latin and English translations, are all, according to his researches, equally uncertain and corrupt; we use his own words, often repeated in a singularly abstruse, elaborate and labored style of writing. We have read in his works this idea, though we cannot now refer to it, that the time will come when the authority of the Scriptures will come to an end.

With Friends' views, that their precepts are to be judged of by individual feeling, these corruptions form no obstacle to the reception of the truths they contain.

There is no mystery in this doctrine—"Thou shalt not steal," is a plain precept in the Bible, and we believe it, not because it is written there, but because we feel the evidence of its correctness in our own minds. A text equally plain is, that "a garment

* See Wm. Penn's folio works, 1st vol. page 599.

mingled of linen and woolen shall not come upon thee." (Leviticus xix. 19.) This we reject, because we have no evidence in our own mind of its truth. This we think is a simple exposition of the true Quaker doctrine. If they had calmly adhered to it, and allowed each member to explain texts according to their own views, without deeming the Society committed thereby, there could have been no schism on the ground of Scripture interpretation.

One of the most powerful demonstrations George Fox ever made was at Nottingham, where, when the priest told his hearers that it was by the Scriptures they were to try all doctrines, religions, and opinions, Fox interrupting him cried out, "O no, it is not the Scriptures, but it is the Holy Spirit by which the holy men of God gave forth the Scriptures whereby opinions, religions, and judgments, are to be tried." Yet Friends afterwards abundantly declared that all their doctrine was to be tried by Scripture. They held many public disputations, some of which lasted for successive days, in which they professed to try their doctrines by that test. Thus they changed their ground and made them instead of a secondary, a primary rule. As courts of final appeal are always supreme courts.

These various views abound in the early Quaker writings. Many have thought they were able to explain them. We have not. We do not believe they can be made to harmonize, or that they ever were analyzed and connected together in the minds of their writers; neither do we believe that it is at all essential to Christianity that they should be. It is a great error to seek for uniformity, or to make a Society ac-

countable for the opinions of its individual members. That there is a deep feeling of sympathy between virtuous minds, no one will presume to doubt. Hence it is that there is great consolation in finding a correspondence between the views of Scripture writers and those truths which our own minds recognize. But because we value them, we need not idolize them. What is true of them, is true of every other idea. Isaac Pennington says, "my desire to the Lord for you is, that he would strip you of all knowledge of the Scriptures according to the flesh, that ye might be made by him capable of knowing and receiving things according to the spirit."*

Yet notwithstanding these views, it is evident that there was a continual effort to make their doctrines correspond with the Scriptures; in order to accomplish this they put their own construction on particular texts, often forced them to suit their own purposes, and undertook what might be considered in some respects a wild crusade in accepting for truth all that they found therein. Many instances of this occurred; we shall refer only to the following.

They quoted repeatedly that passage in the New Testament, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one;" and professed their sincere belief in it.

The great error of determining our faith by ancient authority is clearly manifested in this instance. This text, so sincerely believed in by Friends, has of latter time been subjected to critical examination. Of one

*Pennington's Works. Question to the Professors of Christianity. 2d part, page 9.

hundred and thirteen Greek manuscripts now extant, containing the epistle in which this text occurs, it is only to be found in one copy. It is wanting in all the ancient versions of the Vulgate; it is not in any Latin copies previous to the tenth century; it is wanting in Erasmus's edition, also in that of Luther; and appears to be universally considered by all biblical critics of the present day, even by Trinitarians, as an interpolation made for corrupt sectarian purposes.*

Thus the Society of Friends profess to be sincere believers in this spurious text, and make their members offenders who cannot assent to it.

It would be unwise to deny that "there are three that bear record in heaven," but equally so in my opinion to affirm it. It is a point on which we have no proof, and in the nature of things can have none.

Yet withal we think there were none more firm and earnest believers in the truths contained in the Scriptures than the early Quakers. None but Christians can believe Christian truths, and there are no doubt many sentiments in the Scriptures that will meet the conscientious feeling of every serious mind.

To give them a character they were not designed to have, is in fact to degrade them. Inasmuch as Friends attempted this, it led to contradiction.

Evan's exposition, embracing the Orthodox views of the Society, covers upwards of three hundred pages. They may be the doctrines of Friends; this we do not deny, but we think them not Christian but Pagan doctrines—not spiritualism, but materialism. He denies the contrariety of the doctrines of ancient

* See Clark's Commentaries.

Friends, but this denial is vain, so long as a common sense discrimination of language is not confined to a few sectarians.

Neither this exposition nor any others of the same character, let them come from what division of the Society they may, is entitled to any respect, because they are sectarian, suppressing all parts of the doctrine of Friends but such as suit their own purposes ; and hence they are untrue.

Such expositions have a tendency to build up ancient prejudices, to create animosity and discord, and to justify Friends in severe and exacting measures towards those who do not believe as they do. We shall content ourselves with adverting to one fact which we think will be conclusive on the subject of contrariety.

There are within one day's travel, four distinct Yearly Meetings of Friends ; Gurneyite, Wilburite, Orthodox and Hicksite ; all claiming to derive their doctrines from the same source—governed essentially by the same discipline—each believing that it is the true exponent of ancient Quakerism ; yet with such irreconcilable differences between them, that it appears as though they could more willingly communicate with any other body of professing Christians than with each other.

The cause of this contrariety is easily explained. Quakers as a body have never had any doctrines upon abstruse points upon which all concurred. The attempt to fasten a creed upon its members was not a primary idea ; it grew out of what was erroneously supposed a necessity to make all members conform to a particular faith. It made their ideas of liberty of conscience appear like a solemn mockery. They

were so severely persecuted in England—the term Deist was so freely applied to them—that there was an evident disposition to meet the popular views in theology, as far as was in their power. To this we think is to be traced the trinitarian doctrines so abundant in their writings. If these are closely examined, it will be found that they were mostly, perhaps in every instance, called forth by charges brought against them for unsoundness of faith. Wm. Penn's two works, "The Sandy Foundation Shaken," and "Innocency with her Open Face," give a direct exemplification of our views. We believe them to be irreconcilable with each other. The one was written free from restraint, the other under restraint.

There is a very curious letter from Penn to Fox, illustrative of these views, to be found in Clarkson's life of Penn. The old charge of Deism had been brought against them; a public disputation was held, where it is represented that there were six thousand persons present. The Quakers were utterly at a loss to know how to meet the question, "whether the manhood was a part of Christ?" Penn says in his letter, I cried twice to them, "Christ is not to be divided into parts." Their opponents were desirous for an answer, and he says, "Friends at length consented that it should be answered that the manhood was a part of Christ." The letter is too long for insertion, but should be studied by those who are desirous to trace to its origin that materialism which is so singularly mixed up with the doctrines of the Society.

When Pennsylvania was settled, the Quakers of the colony were removed from under the direct influence of the power of the church; and in the schism

led on by George Keith a few years afterwards, Unitarian doctrines were boldly avowed by the most eminent members of the Society in this country; and the prominent charge made against them by him was, that they were deists. The English Quakers took up the subject, and in defending their position relative to this schism, reiterated their Trinitarian doctrine in the strongest terms that could well be used. This was tacitly admitted, probably from the respect felt for the authority of Friends in the mother country, but it does not appear to have been endorsed by the hearty concurrence of American Friends, and they never adopted that portion of the English discipline made on this subject.

Our views might be illustrated by reference to particular instances. Hannah Barnard, an American Quaker, was harshly treated and sent home from England, for preaching doctrine believed in by many in America. Job Scott, a man second perhaps to none in the Society for devotion to duty and practical religion, has been assailed by English Quaker writers as unsound in the Quaker faith. The schism with Elias Hicks, it is well known, was precipitated by the interference of English Friends. Many who are well acquainted with the facts attending that separation, believe that without that interference it would never have taken place. The effect has been, that those very Orthodox Friends who were so zealous in condemnation of Elias Hicks, find themselves again divided, because many of them cannot concur in the views of the English Quakers. A separation has taken place in the New England Yearly Meeting, and the Orthodox in Philadelphia are only saved from a like

division by the shrewder policy of the oligarchy which governs.

It is evident from these facts, that Friends lost sight of the great principle of Liberty of Conscience; and yet it is a necessary adjunct to individual accountability; without this, it is barren, void, and of none effect.

No persons had a clearer comprehension of the importance of liberty of conscience than the early Quakers; they claimed it as one of the inalienable rights of man, which he should under no circumstances relinquish.

William Penn, after examining the subject under many heads, showing how kingdoms and sects have flourished or decayed as they have adhered to or departed from this principle, says, that "it is the great privilege of nature, the noble principle of reason, the justice, prudence and felicity of government; that it corresponds with the reverence due to God, and respect to the nature, practice, promotion and rewards of the Christian religion."*

George Fox is equally explicit. He claimed and took the liberty of going where he thought proper, and saying what he thought right; in at least one case interrupting a minister in his discourse and contradicting his doctrine. In his work on "Truth's Triumph," he says, "as touching religion, let there be universal liberty for what people soever." * * Let him be Jew, or Papist, or Turk or Heathen, or Protestant, or what sect soever, or such as worship sun, or moon, or stocks, or stones, let them have free

* First vol. folio, page 462.

liberty where every one may bring forth his strength, and have free liberty to speak forth his mind and judgment; and let the magistrates keep the civil peace, that people may not strike one another nor wrong one another's persons, but that they shall be patient one to another."

If these sentiments are true, and they seem to have been accepted as fundamental principles at the rise of the Society, we may at once decide that every thing inconsistent with them must be false. We cannot evade this conclusion. Hence it is that we shall have occasion to say, that there are radical defects in the organization of the Society of Friends. They appear to have felt that whilst they had a right to liberty of conscience in their intercourse with other societies, yet that it was their duty to deny it to their own members; and this contradiction has led the Society into constant confusion and difficulty. William Penn, after writing many pages most emphatically in favor of liberty of conscience, at a subsequent period took the other side of the question, saying that liberty of conscience must be according to God's truth; that "it is the root of ranterism to assert that nothing is a duty incumbent upon thee but what thou art persuaded is thy duty," and after much argument interpreting the "mind of God's truth to be the opinion of the church of Christ, and the Society of Quakers to be that church of Christ."*

See his "Examination and State of Liberty Spiritual. 2d vol. p. 69.

There is an easy solution of these contradictions. Friends had established a system altogether inconsistent with the right of private judgment, and instead of adhering to their first principle upon the subject, which they considered unchangeable, and fearlessly maintaining their own idea that everything that interfered with that was wrong, they yielded it up whenever it came in contact with the opinions of those who they thought had a right to rule in their own Society; thus their liberty of conscience was brought down to a level with that of Papists and with that of Protestant sects, who all allow liberty of conscience so far as it does not interfere with their dogmas.

We define liberty of conscience to mean, First, the acknowledgement of the inherent right of individuals to entertain such views on religion as seem to them true, and that without let or hinderance, or disability of any kind. Men cannot help taking this liberty, and the attempt to control it only makes hypocrites. Second, the right of self-control in all physical affairs—with this exception, which forms a distinct line of demarkation; that no physical injury be done to their fellow men. Physically to injure others under the plea of liberty of conscience, would be, in fact, licentiousness, and would properly come under the cognizance of the civil law. The establishment of a Society may be an affair of great interest, but we have first to consider whether it can be accomplished without interfering with those primary elements of a religious nature, which are deemed fundamental, as forming the root of all religious intelligence.

Our opinion is, that a society formed on the basis of that of Friends, cuts off from itself, by its fundamental principles, the right to interfere with the faith of its individual members, be that what it may. This, we think, was substantially believed by the first Quakers. They thought they had the right, and they exercised the right of judging, and expressing their opinions as they thought proper. And it was not until a church hierarchy was established and another primary principle, that of the reputation of the Society, came into view, that they undertook to control it.

Friends' doctrine and practice on the subject of war is equally contradictory with that we have referred to. At a very early day there was a declaration signed by George Fox and others, stating that they not only disapproved of *war*, but of force of all kind, as being contrary to the spirit of the gospel; similar declarations have often since been made; yet no sooner was the Society organized, than their professions proved practically void. I condemn them not; either Society was to be abandoned, or order must be maintained, and this was only to be effected, in many instances, by removing forcibly, by the exercise of muscular power, those who would not conform to the rules laid down.

The principle upon which Friends hold their meetings—if religious meetings of any kind are deemed necessary—is entitled to respect. It is not required that there should be preaching, unless some one feels impelled to speak. The practice that prevails in other societies of consecrating churches, ordaining ministers, and then paying them for their sermons

and prayers, involves to my mind so much absurdity, that I have been at a loss to understand how sensible minds could submit to it. No matter how feeble the Quaker preaching may be, it is at least not the hackneyed words and sentences which have been uttered again and again, as often as there could be found persons to hear them, till they have clogged the very soul, and have become as dead and lifeless as the pulpit from which they are uttered. There is a principle in Friends' doctrine respecting ministry that compensates for any supposed feebleness. Yet it is not feeble; there is no feebleness in a spontaneous movement towards good, be that what it may.

The testimony of Friends against a hireling ministry, has been fearlessly maintained up to the present time. The annual distraints for different kinds of church rates from Friends in Great Britain, amount to upwards of \$50,000. Of latter time, there has been an enactment for the commutation of all tithes in England and Wales, into a rent charge on the land, but this does not affect the principle. It is natural to suppose there may have been instances of a compromise of this testimony between individuals and the executors of the law. Yet it is understood that the Society as a body has always been consistent therein.

We think it a noble testimony; but adhering to it does not in any degree impeach the integrity of individuals who feel it right to take pay for preaching. Great integrity is often combined with erroneous opinions, and yet these opinions are always injurious

to the outward moral and physical condition of society.

X It is our settled persuasion that priestcraft is the greatest moral evil in the country, not even excepting the baneful influence of slavery. It is by no means confined to those who take pay for preaching; it pervades general society, and is prominent in most of our institutions: we mean, that habit of thought which ascribes to man the attributes of the Most High. The Society of Friends, though they do not pay their ministers, are by no means clear of priestcraft. When they established the idea that there were certain classes of duties which ministers might not be called upon to perform, such as being arbitrators, dealing with offenders, &c., they established a distinct order of priesthood. They further accomplish this, when in their own way they ordain them, and speak of them as having received "a gift in the ministry." It seems to us that speaking in meeting ought to be considered an act of simple obedience to duty manifested according to the best evidence received, and that the words spoken should be accepted for what they appear to be worth.

Friends' doctrine on the subject of dress and address forms a singular mixture of strength and weakness. A rational mind would, we think, decide that that clothing and that language is best, that most fully answers the true object designed; and that to pervert them to purposes of pride and vanity, or to sanctify them in idea as necessarily connected with religion, are equally at variance with religion and common sense.

So early as the year 1709, the discipline in regard

to plainness says: "That when the apparent signs of the plague of leprosy appeared on the walls of the houses of Israel, it was the care of the priests under the law to have the lepers cleansed and the houses also; and surely Christ's priesthood should not fall short of their care, to endeavor to stop and remove the manifest tokens of the leprosy of the great sin of pride and all superfluity of naughtiness." These ideas, which are repeated in other forms of words, have been productive of much trouble to the Society, and much vexation to members of it, who thought they had a right to judge for themselves as to what apparel they would wear.

At one period Friends thought themselves justified in visiting their members and taking instruments with them for the purpose of removing ornamental work from articles of furniture; some of the mutilated furniture yet remains. In another case, at an early day, a Friend in printing a work declined to use capital letters, even to proper names.

We admit that these are extreme cases; but the idea that one color is less holy than another, has led to many absurdities.

The Quaker discipline respecting language is not altogether correct in matter of fact. It gives a reason for the use of the numerical designation of the months, that it is the language of Scripture. It may be more simple, we think it so; but the Jewish names for the months were not confined to numerals, and it is remarkable that the months of their sacred year had names which seem to correspond with our present common designations.

The question may naturally occur, why should

there be an objection to using the term March, because so called from the feigned "god of War;" or April, as coming from the Greek appellation of Venus; or May, from the mother of Mercury; or June from Juno, one of the goddesses of the heathen; and yet find no scruple in using the names of those heathen deities themselves, when applied to the planets. When men forsake enlightened reason and common sense, to run after myths and shadows, the end is confusion. We have no doubt there is substantial philosophy in the doctrines of Friends on these subjects, but its power is neutralized when it is connected with traditions which have in themselves no force.

Other doctrines of the Society would deserve notice, if we were disposed to extend this work. Their views respecting oaths are entitled to respect, for obvious reasons, which are more and more claiming the attention of society at large. There are those who believe the substitution of the affirmation was little short of an evasion—there have been many Quakers who rejected this also, deeming it an implied reflection on their veracity.

It seems to us remarkable, that though Friends seemed at times to have a clear perception of the universality of the power of God, and that *he* "is indeed no respecter of persons," they so easily adopted the opinion that they were "a peculiar people, called and chosen out of the world,"* and that the special interference of the Deity was exerted on their behalf. One of the early queries ran thus :

"What signal judgments have come upon persecutors?" This query was grounded upon this advice.

* See the English Discipline.

“Remember to keep a true record of manifest judgments upon persecutors, that the just judgments of God in pleading the cause of the innocent sufferers, by signally punishing their persecutors, may be taken notice of as a warning to posterity.” This query and advice have long since passed away.

The contradictions in the doctrines of the Society have arisen from the attempt to have two standards of religious faith, and to give the same authority to statements made by others, the evidence of which is received through the senses, and which in its nature must be material, as to those spiritual truths experienced in their own minds, and which they believed were the result of an influx from the spirit of the Most High. It was thus they expressed their confident belief, before referred to, in the “three that bear record in heaven.” Their faith in the efficacy of the blood of Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice, in his resurrection, &c., is of the same character. We are not considering whether these views are true or false, and certainly have no point to establish, having our own views wholly independent of others; but we undertake to say that if there is but one true faith, the power of truth manifested in the secret of the soul, it is prostituted when it is burthened with traditionary dogmas, with which it has no connection.

If there is but one standard of religious faith, the attempt to make two must inevitably lead to confusion.

In contemplating the character of the early Quakers, the conviction is forced upon us that there was among them a remarkable combination of spirituality and superstition. Were we to attempt to define their

faith, we should say that is it in reality a beautiful idea of individual virtue ; of practical righteousness, wholly independent of doctrines of any kind. But as it stands in books, and is defined by expositors, it is Paganism and Christianity so combined, that no rational man can be expected to understand it.

The members of the Society have been so long accustomed to a reverential regard of the early Quakers, that we are quite sensible that any views that call in question their opinions will be at once rejected.

The doctrines of the early Quakers may be a matter of interest, but man degrades himself when he adopts them as his guide. The first qualification in the attainment of truth, is a mind prepared to receive it. Pre-conceived ideas that the early Quakers were right, are in themselves a barrier to the attainment of truth.

We have dwelt longer upon the doctrines of Friends, because of late years they have been much referred to, and have been made the subjects of bitter discussion. Properly considered, they should be an olive branch of peace, since, with the single exception of the ultra views of the Gurneyite Quakers, all the doctrines maintained by modern Friends may be found in the ancient writings of the Society ; whether these be Unitarian or Trinitarian. We know not which most prevails. Minds, like trees, produce fruit according to their kind. A peaceable mind would draw harmony from these doctrines : one disposed to war, contention.

The Orthodox of the various divisions will of course say, that they must have some precise faith. It is consistent with the state they are in, that they should place confidence in opinions ; they believe them to be true

and necessary, because the veil has not fallen from their eyes. We believe the idea false in principle, that it is the effect of a religion that places its dependence on material things—and being thus, it has brought forth its natural fruits, discord and confusion.

DISCIPLINE.

We come next to consider the Discipline of the Society of Friends, and though we shall have occasion to show its entire unsuitableness to the wants and feelings of the present age, we know too little of the sentiments which prevailed two centuries ago, can enter too slightly into the excited state of the public mind when the Discipline was formed to hazard the opinion that it was wrong at the period in which it was instituted.

There is a remarkable sentiment in Hume's History of England in regard to the Star chamber, one of the most arbitrary courts that ever existed. It is to this effect : "The same maxims of government that suit a rude people may not be proper in a more advanced stage of Society. The abolition of the Star Chamber might have been as wise in the age of Charles I, as its establishment or the enlargement of its power in that of Henry VII."*

This sentiment may apply equally to the Discipline of the Society of Friends. That deference to public opinion, with which we are familiar in the present day, was little known and understood in the 17th

* Hume, vol. 3, note N.

century. And it is to this cause we may ascribe many of the arbitrary rules and dogmas that now exist in the Society.

No principle appears more indisputable than the right of a *properly* organized body to enact laws for its own government, but the whole force of this admission rests upon the fact that the organization is proper.

We doubt whether this ever was the case among Friends; we believe it to be entirely inconsistent with the usual sentiments and feelings of the present day.

Professedly the organization is a democracy, giving equal rights to all; in reality it is an oligarchy, in which all the power and influence of the Society are in the hands of a few. It seems to be supposed that a particular class of the members of each meeting have the right and ought to rule, without any popular expression of opinion as to this right. It is what is called the sense of the meeting that governs, and that is generally decided by the voice of those who are already in power, and who deem it essential that their own particular views should be maintained, and who expect implicit acquiescence in the decisions. Thus, by long usage, a self constituted oligarchy is established, who frown upon every suggestion that does not accord with ancient prescription; in general the larger portion of the Society have no more influence than if they did not belong to it, and by this means are perpetuated the contradictions, the superstitions, and absurdities of former ages.

It was this oligarchy who attempted to re-enact the Apostolic code. There is a progress in the affairs of

men and the laws of one age are seldom adapted to a succeeding one. It was as reasonable for the people of Massachusetts to re-enact the Mosaic code, as for Friends to re-enact the Apostolic code. When people become copyists, they cease to be men in the enlarged sense of the word.

The early Quakers left behind them this noble sentiment: "Say not in your hearts, as these atheists recorded in Scripture, all things continue as they were at the beginning, and where is the promise of his coming?"*

With the adoption of the Apostolic code, was coupled the assumption that the Quaker meetings were the church of Christ, and Friends seemed to have no hesitation in claiming for themselves infallible judgment, and recognizing the idea that "whatsoever they bound on earth should be bound in heaven."

One of their queries is to this effect, whether judgment is placed against offenders *in the authority of Truth*.

The arguments by which they sustained these claims, while they denied them entirely to the Romish church, form a curious specimen of special pleading. They would be all true if their premises were true; but these being untrue, the conclusions formed upon them are false.

Fox beautifully describes "the church of Christ as the pillar and ground of truth, made up of living stones, living members, a spiritual household, which Christ was the head of." Yet Barclay says: "If none may be excluded from communion with the body, for

* Besse, vol. 2, pp. 5, 23.

his judgment or opinion in matters of Faith, then what blasphemies so horrid, what heresies so damnable, what doctrine of devils but might harbor itself in the church of Christ?"

These two eminent men were, in this instance, in direct opposition to each other; the one making the church of Christ to consist of "living members," the other of the mixed multitude of a Quaker meeting.

The doctrine of Friends is that of individualism, while organization involves the necessity of the relinquishment of individual rights for the good of the whole. Individual sovereignty in its fulness, and the sovereignty of a Society, cannot exist together; hence, when Friends maintained the social principle, they deny the one; when the supremacy of the inward Light, they reject the other. It is a question how far they may be made to correspond.

A careful examination of the system of the Society will, we think, demonstrate that there has been an attempt to reconcile irreconcilable things; to join together what God has separated; to incorporate upon an individual principle, a social principle, with checks and balances, wholly inconsistent with spiritualism. This can never be done with impunity. The laws of God are eternal and unchangeable; as well might a mechanic introduce counteracting forces into his machine, and expect it to work harmoniously. The laws of morals are as fixed as those of mechanism; when these are violated, the result is inevitable.

The formation of the discipline furnishes a curious illustration of the gradual encroachment of power. The first objects were praiseworthy; the care of those

who were suffering in the prisons of England, of widows and orphans, and of others who needed assistance. It next extended to marriages, to the settlement of differences, finally, to matters of faith, and to the regulation of most of the affairs of life.

Whatever apology the excited state of the period at which the Society was organized may be supposed to furnish for these assumptions, we know of none for their continuance in the present day. They are the effect of a deeply rooted sectarianism; unworthy of any enlightened community; and they have produced as their natural fruits the most unhappy effects. Within thirty years of the organization of the system; three important schisms occurred which shook the Society to its centre, and from which it has never recovered, and it may be safely assumed it never will recover until the causes that produced them are removed.

The assumption of power by ecclesiastical bodies has been the great evil of the Christian world. It is this that has given rise to all the schisms that have ever occurred among Friends. It is needful for the establishment of dogmas, and an enforced adherence to preconceived opinions, but contrary to the uniform pleadings of Friends upon other occasions, contrary to the principles that formed the real bond of union among them.

By this assumption of power, in despite of very serious opposition from many of the most enlightened minds among them, who clearly discerned the nature of the movement, there was rapidly constructed, instead of a liberal and enlightened Discipline, somewhat in accordance with their professed principles,

one perhaps more complicated and exacting than ever was, in any other instance, submitted to by a free people.

There are different classes of meetings; some of higher, others of lower degree, with regulations relative to faith and doctrine, and also to the minute affairs of private life, which to disinterested minds might appear wholly unessential. There are different orders of members, with queries indicating that a greater degree of holiness is expected from some than from others.

George Fox was the prime mover in this work; it evidently arose from a want of faith in that divine power which, in other instances, he so nobly illustrated. He labored hard for what was, in fact, a subversion of his own principles. The natural tendency of power is to corrupt the mind, and dispose it to trample upon individual rights. Fox seemed not to suppose that such could ever be the case in his own Society.

We are not certain that spontaneous meetings, with liberty of conscience, only restricted so far as to preserve order, are not the only religious organizations that are consistent with the Christian religion. Church hierarchies are essential to the monarchies of Europe—essential to the power of the Pope—to the Episcopal church, and others of a like character; They are oligarchies in which a few Bishops, Cardinals, &c., control the destiny perhaps of millions. Princes mould them to their purposes; hence they are patronized by them. History furnishes a melancholy record of their atrocities. The nations of Europe are struggling to free themselves from their

bondage; power may crush these efforts for a time, but eventually they must prevail. The people will not forever submit to systems which in their attempt to enforce implicit submission, blight every budding of rational freedom. Wherever found, they have but one source, and are believed to be absolutely inconsistent with the principles upon which the Society of Friends is professedly founded.

By this movement the Society gained consistency, but it lost power and energy. From that period its decline may be dated, and it has been torn by schism and dissension to the present day. These views will not be assented to by those who ask us to rally round the Discipline as the ark of our safety. They are not willing to believe that this system, promulgated by the founders of the Society, and which is so dearly cherished, can be defective.

Admitting that this complicated Discipline was ever right, it would not follow that the experience of the early Quakers is adapted to the wants of the present day.

At the root of the Discipline was the denial of liberty of conscience in regard to things in themselves innocent; and it very soon showed itself in the most offensive manner. Not satisfied with severe rules to regulate the conduct of its members, within a few years of its organization the Society undertook to prescribe what faith they should have, even in matters of which, in the nature of things, these self-constituted rulers were themselves wholly ignorant. As early as the year 1694 they made a law, that "if any should deny the validity of Christ's sufferings, blood, resurrection, ascension, or glory in the hea-

vens," and "persist in error in point of faith," "he shall be dealt with according to gospel order;" the meaning of which is, that he shall be disowned by the Society.

This article of the English Discipline was never formally adopted in America. It is believed there never was a period when Friends in this country would have received it. The American Discipline reads thus: "If any shall deny the divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," the immediate revelation of the Holy Spirit, or the authenticity of the Scriptures, and persist in their error, testimony against them shall issue," &c. There is a material difference in the letter of the two Disciplines, but in spirit they are the same. They both assume to decide points of doctrine on which they have no better means of judging than those they testify against.

We have no reason to doubt the sincerity of those who carry such a discipline into effect. We suppose they act faithfully according to the state they are in, but we think such proceedings never could occur in an enlightened Christian community.

The early Quakers performed a great work; but valiant as they were, they were not perfect, and modern Quakers deny their own principles when they make them and their testimonies objects of idolatry.

It is a contradiction to attempt to prescribe a precise faith to a Society whose primary principle is individuality, or to expect Monthly Meetings to be governed by the evidence of truth, and yet to insist upon their conformity to certain written rules, established perhaps, a hundred years before.

It may be said that there is discretion allowed in

the exercise of the Discipline, and this is true, to a limited extent; but there are many cases in which the Discipline is imperative. I have sat in Monthly Meetings for a series of years, and on the various Committees usually appointed therein, and I never knew the Discipline departed from. It has been my lot to see many cases, in the dealing with and disownment of members, from which my own feelings revolted. Many cases in which the benevolent feelings of valuable Friends, appeared to have been violated in order to uphold the Discipline; I have seen men of natural kindness and tenderness become hard-hearted and severe, I have seen justice turned backwards, and mercy laid aside.

Many such instances occur in the usual course of events in the Society of Friends. The language of conduct, has invariably been, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die." Friends act in their meeting capacities in a way in which they would be ashamed to act as individuals. These are facts too common to admit of contradiction. Friends will of course say that they endeavor to act with tenderness. I deny it not; so also does the executioner when he enforces the law. He regrets the necessity, but he also says: "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die." They are but different manifestations of the same spirit, and in the Society of Friends it is the result of an organization, formed in other times, wholly unadapted to the spirit of the age, the effect of which is to deprive individuals of their natural benevolence. So strikingly is this the case, that the members of Society, (I speak of those more active in their meetings,) appear to be more religious out of

their meetings than in them. The effect of the Discipline is to harden their hearts. Again, and again, have I witnessed the conflict in individual minds between the kindly feelings of their nature, and the requirements of the Discipline. I have known Committees to acknowledge that individuals have done the best they could under the circumstances, and yet with this language upon their lips, they have disowned them, because the rules of the Society required it.

Many cases of hardship have passed under my observation. Children grow up with a strong attachment to the Society in which they were born, and yet the tie that binds them to it is sundered for causes which, to an unprejudiced mind, must seem frivolous in the extreme. A long and sad catalogue might be drawn, if that were needful. In many cases it is a real disadvantage to be a member of the Society. I have known the most touching appeals to be made by the friends of individuals, not to disown, where injury would result. In one case, a physician, not a member of Society, requested the Committee not to disown, fearing it might result in the death of his patient, assuring them that every thing might be hoped from forbearance. It was in vain. He had been a previous offender and he was disowned.

In a failure in business involving no moral delinquency, the disownment was brought into court at a critical time as an argument against the party, and had, it was believed, a highly injurious and improper effect.

In cases involving moral wrong, a record is made of it, to be a stigma upon generations yet unborn.

Language fails me in attempting to convey the

deep feeling of pain and sorrow that these disownments by the Society of Friends, have brought over my mind. To such an extent has this been carried, that I estimate that three-fourths of the children of my cotemporaries have been disowned.

Where are the descendants of those estimable men who first settled this province; they are mostly extinct, as respects the sect; not because they have violated any moral law, or have not been excellent men and citizens, performing faithfully their duty according to their conceptions of right, but because they have infringed some rule not adapted to human nature.

I would willingly pass over a reference to particular cases, were it not needful for me to sustain general statements by facts that can admit of no dispute.

Every person marrying contrary to the order of Society, is disowned, unless he or she make an acknowledgment of regret, which in general they are not willing to do; the spirit of this acknowledgment must be that the Society is right, and that they are wrong. This was at one period carried to such an extreme, that parents were required not to give portions of their estate to children who had thus married, without first advising with the men's meeting of which they were members. The general purport of this discipline was, that parents should treat their children as aliens, until they should make satisfactory concessions to the meeting. They were not to receive them, entertain them, or be familiar with them, until the meeting to which they belonged was sensible of their true repentance. If parents deviated from this, they were to be closely dealt with, and not permitted to sit in meetings of discipline. These requirements

continued many years, and were no doubt rigorously enforced. We may call it barbarous, and yet it was but carrying out to its ultimate end the Discipline of the Society.

This severity never was fully enforced in this country, yet we know one case in Maryland in which parents were obliged, under pain of disownment, to make an acknowledgment to the meeting, for having received a child into their house a few days after being married out of the order of Society.

My impression, however, is, that the English Discipline was most consistent with itself.

Why should we disown members, and thus deprive them of those privileges which we consider so essential, in a religious point of view, and yet receive them with affection and kindness in social communion. The explanation is easy: in our families we act as men and Christians; in our meetings, as sectarians and bigots.

If we separate our children from religious communion, to be consistent we should also refuse social intercourse with them. The idea of early Friends was, that when they married out of the Society,^f they married unbelievers, and thus separated themselves from the Church of Christ.

I am aware of the arguments that are used regarding marriages with those of other Societies. If they are plausible, they do not apply to cases where persons marry those who are as much Quakers as themselves, save only in membership. Appeals of this kind have often been made, but they have been of no avail. The language is, the law ~~and~~ must be fulfilled. In other cases, persons have applied to be

received into membership in order to accomplish their marriage with individuals who are Friends ; it has been equally fruitless. If we suppose, as no doubt is many times the case, that individuals under the best influences they can command, enter into the marriage state with persons who are not members, they perform what may be deemed a religious act in so doing. And yet the Society of Friends considers it an offence, and the anomaly is presented, that they must deny the fundamental principles of the Society in order to retain their membership.

In one case of this kind, after many years experience, a woman observed that she had been disowned for the best act of her life.

Many have been disowned for being present at marriages performed out of what is called the order of Society ; this is when either one or both parties have been members.

In a case that occurred in Ireland, where the parties chose to adopt a more simple form of marriage than that among Friends, besides the parties themselves, ten others were disowned for being present.

On another occasion, a person who was present at a marriage, when both parties had been previously disowned, and read the marriage certificate, was disowned for the act, though it was not what they termed a disorderly marriage.

In a case that occurred within a few years, under my own observation, an estimable young woman, a member of the Society of Friends, was married to an Episcopalian. The Discipline did not allow the ceremony to be performed under the parental roof ; she went to the Episcopalian Church where a number of

her friends accompanied her. They were all searched out by the Monthly Meetings of which they were members, and all disowned, against whom proof could be found, and who did not make an apology. One person who stood on the steps of the church, which she was accidentally passing, though she did not absolutely witness the performance of the marriage ceremony, was also disowned. It was construed into being present at the marriage, and she refused to make an acknowledgment. These individuals are all living, and worthy, estimable people. They had been educated Quakers, their associations were with that Society, and no evil could be laid to their charge. This is not worse than many other cases, and is the natural effect of a cold, inexorable, unfeeling Discipline.

It is a common practice for members to leave the apartment at the moment the ceremony is performed, and return immediately after. This satisfies the Discipline.

If there are any neighborhoods where this occurrence has not taken place, they are the exceptions. We know of none such. In one case, within our knowledge, it is estimated that thirty persons left the room at the moment the ceremony was to be performed, and though they returned immediately after, the letter of the Discipline was not violated, and they escaped disownment. If this subterfuge is degrading to the minds of those who practice it, how much more so to the association that establishes rules from which it comes, and that connives at it. The cases above referred to, are in accordance with the usual practice of the Society. Many parents have been disowned for allowing their children to be married in their houses;

others for attending places of worship belonging to other societies, although alleging that their own meeting was never neglected for that purpose. Some for having music in their houses ; for non attendance of meetings ; for paying a militia fine, &c. And in many of these cases the parties have had a deep and reverential attachment to Friends, and have felt it a great hardship to be deprived of their right of membership. A physician of unblemished character, still living, was disowned for giving to some disabled soldiers certificates that they were suitable objects for the military bounty of the government. This was construed into a connivance with warlike affairs inconsistent with membership in the Society.

There are many other causes of disownment equally frivolous, which will suggest themselves to minds familiar with the proceedings of the Society.

Isaac Pearson, of England, wrote in the last century a pamphlet entitled, "The implacable cruelty of the Quakers in Cumberland." He charged them with persecution in disowning him for being occasionally present in his wife's chamber, when she was dangerously ill, near the birth of one of her children. This was deemed an indecorum by some of the women who were present. He was required to make an apology to the meeting, which he declined. He was disowned, and appealed, when the disownment was confirmed.

This affords a striking instance of the abuse of power ; and how little dependence there is, that superior meetings will redress wrongs. There is probably always a predisposition to sustain the proceedings of inferior meetings.

Arbitrary measures appear to have been coeval

with the discipline. I make the following extracts from the "Memoir of the life of Elizabeth Fry," edited by two of her daughters, who, it is understood are not Quakers. If this work had been submitted to the revision of the Society, such passages would no doubt have been suppressed.

"I cannot deny that, much as I love the principle, earnestly as I desire to uphold it, bitter experience has proved to me, that Friends do rest too much in externals; and that valuable, indeed jewels of the first water, as are many amongst them, yet there are also serious evils in our Society, and amongst its members." * * * * * The affairs of our Society cause me real anxiety and pain, and reconcile me, in measure, to so many of my children leaving Friends. Though it is painful and humbling in my own meeting, my children's names being on the books only for disownment."

The natural effect of the Discipline against paying militia fines and church rates, is to lead to deception; and requiring acknowledgments from those who transgress the Discipline, leads to hypocrisy.

In a Society constituted like that of Friends, it might seem to be a natural right, that each should have the liberty of examining the proceedings of meetings, censuring where they deserve censure, and praising where they deserve praise. To deny this, is despotism and not liberty, and yet it is denied by the Society of Friends. A rigid and severe censorship over the press has been in long use among them, and a member is not allowed to publish anything touching even incidentally upon the doctrines or practices of the Society, without first submitting the manuscript

to the inspection of the meeting appointed for that purpose. Limited by the narrow confines of the Society, and without the power of punishment, yet we think it is as rigid as that of Napoleon during his iron reign. Under this censorship, not only every spontaneous sentiment in new works, not in accordance with a particular standard, is expunged, but writings that have been heretofore published have been to a considerable extent mutilated to suit the feelings of the age.

From this cause, no certain confidence can be placed in the authenticity of Friends' writings as they now appear.

We design not to censure the early Quakers ; they performed a great work, and the manliness with which they breasted the torrent of sectarianism around them, is worthy of the highest respect.

But it is evident they were not strong enough to carry out their own principles : the day, perhaps, had not yet come for this ; and it is not improbable, had they boldly avowed them to their full extent, that Friends would have been led to the stake. We have seen evidence of this in the menaces used to William Penn during his confinement in the tower. There were, no doubt, causes for a censorship at that period ; that have long since passed away. We know of no apology for it at the present time.

This censorship has been carried to a fearful extent, and has had the effect to suppress many just criticisms on the proceedings of the Society.

A respectable printer, now living, was a few years ago disowned for printing a work, not containing a word immoral, irreligious, or unkind to any sect

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or individual, but which in some parts had a remote bearing upon the doctrines of the Society. He appealed to the Yearly Meeting against such flagrant injustice, alleging that he had done it in the line of his business, that he had known nothing of the contents of the work. He appealed in vain.

In the early days of the Federal Government, a Sedition Law was enacted to prevent improper publications. It produced the most unpleasant effects, and had it not been repealed, would probably have subverted the Government.

An unlimited censorship over the press is only consistent with despotism. As freedom has prevailed in England, it has been abandoned. It is error that fears investigation—not truth ; individuals, acting as such, need not commit the Society. They publish their own opinions ; to all who deem them unsound, they avail nothing. We think the greatest injury that has resulted from unsound opinions, has arisen from the attempt to suppress them.

The censorship over the press has been relaxed in the London Yearly Meeting, and from this cause some of those extraordinary exhibitions of the Quaker doctrine, to which we have alluded, are to be attributed. Admitting they are wrong, which the American Quakers seem to suppose, the best way to correct errors is to expose them.

Members have a right to express their sentiments in a meeting of Discipline ; but if their views be not in accordance with those of the Society, they are not, in general, deemed worthy of consideration. Many being unaccustomed to public speaking, find it an unsuitable means to convey their sentiments. Thus the

voice of the great body of the meeting is in effect unheard. The Constitution of the United States prohibits Congress from making any law "abridging the freedom of the press." That of Pennsylvania is still more explicit. "Printing presses shall be free to every person who undertakes to examine the proceedings of the Legislature, or any branch of Government, and no law shall ever be made to restrain the right thereof." These provisions express the general sentiments of the country, and the Society of Friends have no right to violate them.

In the oligarchy which governs, majorities are not respected. The sense of the meeting, which sometimes means a small minority, decides all disputed questions. By this means the errors I have alluded to have been perpetuated. This power exists in each of the divisions of the Society, and is inimical to freedom and progress, because it cannot believe that any thing is valuable that does not conform to its own views. It decides what is sound and what is unsound doctrine; what men ought to believe and what they ought to reject. By its sovereign will, it excommunicates whole meetings, and disowns individuals of the most estimable character, because their opinions do not accord with its own.

At the time of the Hicksite division, it was estimated that but one-third of the members of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting were of the party called Orthodox. Yet this minority claimed to be exclusively the Society of Friends. They sued the majority at the law, and would have taken every dollar of the common property, had the law allowed them to do so.

They denied them the right of burial in the common cemetery, applied to them opprobrious names, anathematized the meetings where they had the ascendancy, and went through the form of disowning each member individually. At this period they made the following Discipline :

“ If any of our members should attend the meetings of those who have separated from us, and have set up meetings contrary to the order and discipline of our religious Society, or should attend any of the marriages accomplished among the said people, or sign the certificates issued on those occasions, as it is giving countenance to, and acknowledging those meetings as though they were the meetings of Friends, this meeting declares that such conduct is of evil tendency, and repugnant to the harmony and well being of our religious Society ; and when such instances occur, Friends are desired to extend brotherly care and labor, that the individuals may be instructed and reclaimed, and if those endeavors prove ineffectual, Monthly Meetings should testify against them.”

The chief actors in this Orthodox movement were men of irreproachable character, of religious minds ; among the best members in their own Society and of the community. They made professions of peace, and were peaceable men, yet it was evidently consistent with the state they were in, to indulge in acrimonious and severe denunciations against men as excellent as themselves, and withal they seemed to believe they did God service herein, and every overture for conciliation made by the other division was coldly repelled.

The influence of the oligarchy in Baltimore Yearly

Meeting was still more remarkable. At the separation, there were but seventy-six of the Orthodox, while there were nine hundred of the Friends, or Hicksites. Of fifty-four regularly appointed representatives from the inferior meetings, but one individual joined the Orthodox party; yet this small number claimed, and still claim, to be the genuine Society, rejected all inferior meetings that did not acknowledge their authority, and disowned their members.

This exhibition of ecclesiastical power is worthy of the careful consideration of the moralist, from the otherwise excellent character of the men who were engaged in it. The body of both divisions of the Society were, and remain to be, one people both in doctrine and practice, but the oligarchy undertook to define, by incomprehensible and mystical language, which no one, we believe, can understand, the character and mission of Christ.

The pioneers in this work were the English Quaker oligarchy. The Orthodox Friends in Philadelphia were in some degree their instruments, not suspecting that they should so soon have publicly to denounce the English Quaker doctrine also,* and be compelled to walk in the narrow path between the English Friends and the majority of those in America. We are not certain that the Hicksites would have done any better under the same circumstances. The Papal power originated the idea, that what it called the true Church was the proper interpreter, not only of the Scriptures, but of every alleged spiritual influence;

* See an Appeal for Ancient Doctrines, published by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1847.

and Friends in adopting this idea as applied to their own Society, necessarily subject themselves to all its consequences.

It may reasonably be questioned whether a system that violates the charities of life, under which men naturally kind and humane became hard-hearted and severe, is worthy of respect.

The fundamental law of Pennsylvania is very explicit in guarding individual rights. It says, that "no human authority can interfere with the rights of conscience."* Is it not a direct violation of this article of the Constitution to dismiss men from the Society for their conscientious persuasion, and then, as a consequence of such dismissal, forcibly deprive them of their right in the common property? We think it is. We think too that other parts of the Discipline would be deemed illegal by the courts of Pennsylvania.

Many individuals have contributed largely to building meeting houses and to other Society affairs. They do not even accord to those whom they disown, the common justice of returning to them their property. It avails nothing to say that Friends are bound by a mutual compact. A compact contrary to law is void, and it is not a mutual compact where the laws are made by an oligarchy.

We listened, in the Green Street Yearly Meeting of the present year, to a long discussion on the subject of the propriety of allowing individuals to put up small stones at the graves of their deceased friends. The question was, whether these stones were monuments, which are forbidden in the Discipline. A mi-

* See Constitution of Pennsylvania.

nority, as we thought, decided that they were monuments, and objected to any change. This minority appeared to think it a great evil to place a stone one foot square, to designate the grave of a deceased friend. Herein also they violate law.

Whenever an interment takes place in a common property, that portion becomes individual property by the strongest of all tenures, that of possession added to a consideration paid. It is an established legal principle, that conveying a lot of land in the middle of a field, gives the possessor right of way to it, whether it is provided for in the deed of conveyance or not; it also gives to him the right to erect on it any structure he may please, and these privileges cannot be denied by the Society of Friends without a violation of common law applicable to real estate. Such are the natural results of religious societies interfering with individual rights.

I confess I am unable to understand how man, weak and fallible as he is, coming he knows not whence, and going he knows not whither, should be so forward to condemn a brother for speculative points of faith, of which they are alike ignorant, or for exercising what would seem to be an inherent right of choice, in those affairs that would appear to concern no one but himself.

I am unable to understand how those individuals to whom divine mercy has been extended year after year, perhaps amidst many weaknesses and transgressions, can rise up to disown a member who, possibly, in the sight of the great Judge of all, has not been so guilty as themselves. In these disownments the accusers, judge, and jury, are often combined in the

so

same persons, that even if the principle was right, the practice would be likely to be partial and unjust.

Measures so manifestly sectarian and so inconsistent with the general intelligence and benevolence of individual Friends, and from the spirit of which they would recoil in private life, can only be traced to the ascendancy of erroneous preconceived opinions.

From infancy children are taught dogmas and modes of faith, around which are thrown mysticism and sanctity, and the young mind is made to believe that it is sinful to doubt and dangerous to investigate, and thus errors in theology are more inveterate, more deeply rooted, than upon any other subject.

I state, without fear of contradiction, that there is no where to be found a more promising class of young persons than those who have been educated among Friends; "no where to be met with a greater purity of life and sentiment, a more enviable preservation of a youth-like tenderness of conscience; a deeper sense of the obligations of justice; of the beauty of punctuality."*

We see the social gatherings of these young people always with emotions of pleasure, but mingled with regret that the Society of Friends, even before they obtain their majority, will come in among them with its cold, unfeeling hand, and do its utmost to separate friend from friend, brothers from sisters, parents from children, and this by the means of a discipline foreign to the feelings of the age, and experienced often by persons with minds less pure, less religious than those they disown.

* See "George Fox and his Friends," by William Howitt.

The reasons Friends give for their peculiar discipline is, "that the Truth, Church, or body of Christ may not suffer." Again and again is the idea repeated, that these regulations are necessary to save the Truth from reproach, without seeming to realize that Truth and Integrity stand on an impregnable basis and require no shield.

In proportion as the complicated machinery of this system engaged the attention of Friends, their power and moral strength diminished, until they had become a small sectarian society, receiving comparatively little respect. Their numbers have lessened, their influence is gone.

The want of success of any particular system is not in itself, proof of its incorrectness. A true principle exists in its own inherent power, and derives no support from the opinions of men. Were it otherwise, we might put Christianity and Mahometanism, Popery and Prelacy, in a balance, and decide upon the truth of their doctrines by the weight of numbers. But the failure of a system of morals is evidence that it is not adapted to the state of society, and may lead us very seriously to inquire whether the system itself is correct. We claim to have shown by evidence, which we think no rational mind can deny, that the organization among Friends has been the result of weakness and not strength. Even those testimonies which contained in themselves so much power, coming, as they seemed to come, from an intelligence above human thought and conception, and which left those great marks in politics and morals to which we have alluded, are shorn of their strength when they are adhered to as the testimonies

and doctrines of men of other generations; and yet there is, perhaps, no important document issues from any division of the Society, that does not claim that we shall fulfil these testimonies and this discipline, because they are those of ancient Friends. And thus the progress of the Society has been more effectually retarded than if there had been an enactment that it should go no further. It seems to be a law of our spiritual nature, that when the mind is filled with the opinions of others, it becomes disqualified to distinguish truth.

Has that intelligence that Friends believe gave forth those testimonies, ceased to operate, that the present should be lost in the past? This will not be admitted to be the case by the Society, and there is still abundant scope for the exercise of that spirit of philanthropy and benevolence which formerly produced great results, and which, through channels as yet perhaps unsuspected, is, we believe, to prove of increased benefit to the family of man.

We read of accumulated crimes and sufferings with a deep conviction that they are absolutely within the control of an enlightened community. The fundamental principle of Friends practically carried out, is, in itself, moral reformation. How far this reformation may be extended by minds properly alive to the subject, is beyond our feeble conception.

Every true movement, political, civil, moral or religious, has but one basis, the revelation of God to the soul of man, and they are all equally religious when they come from pure minds.

We have said on a former page, that every religious organization, (so called) is a civil government;

we may add our opinion that so far as civil government is just and true, it is also a religious government. The principle of government is inherent in, and inseparable from, society. So also is the religious principle inseparable from the nature of man.

Religion may be termed a union with the Divine harmony. That man must be blind indeed who does not recognize it throughout the human family. Amidst all the paganism, materialism, and the tendency to symbolic worship, there is an under-current of spiritualism, of unadulterated Christianity. It is manifested in our families, in our work-shops, in our fields, and it is that which preserves us as a people in our civil relations.

Barclay labored to prove that the Divine light in the mind was not a natural light ; other Friends object to its being deemed an inherent principle ; others again reject the word innate. Those that understand these will speak of them as they please ; we recognize no light or truth that is not referable to the eternal mind.

In the whole range of human affairs, no situation is to be found that would not be benefitted by men who looked inwardly rather than outwardly for the evidences of truth.

In the army of Cromwell there were many Quaker soldiers, who were persecuted and suffered deeply for adhering to a more rigid system of morality than was deemed right by the officers.* And from the soldier and the statesman, down to the humblest mechanic, it may be assumed that introversion of mind is the

*See Besse, 2d vol.

surest qualification for the performance of every duty, however menial or however exalted.

Penn, and his cotemporaries in the province mingled deeply in politics. It has been a prevalent idea that herein Penn lost ground in his religious character. We think that deep religious feeling was much more marked in his politics than in his sectarian controversies; yet it is probable that the Orthodox party in either division of the Society, would disown both Penn and Logan for the part they took on the subject of war as referred to on a former page. We have seen in the present day both Hicksite and Orthodox, so called, disowning some of their most respectable members, because they manifested their opposition to slavery in a way that was not in accordance with the exact usage and prescription of the governing class. Thus has it been in all ages, that assumed orthodoxy has paralyzed many of the noblest efforts of the human mind.

These men that have been thus disowned are worthy of double honor, in having nobly opposed negro slavery on the one hand, and ecclesiastical domination on the other.

We may be told that the superior character of individual Friends may be ascribed to the Discipline. We think not. The tendency of coercive enactments is to harden the heart, and the exercise of the discipline of the Society forms no exception. Excellent, kind, and generous men may of course be concerned therein, but in proportion thereunto, their vital religion is likely to be lessened.

To the idea "that man should watch over himself," we ascribe all the superiority that exists, if such

there be, in the Society of Friends; as a class, we think there are no better members of the community, both in their civil and social relations. There are districts of country where the Quaker influence prevails, in which, for successive years, there have been no magistrates, because there was no occasion for them. The Quaker doctrine, that each individual must reform himself, is the true ground of human progress.

Having thus expressed our opinion that the contradictions existing in the doctrines of the Society, and the exacting nature of their discipline, have produced their natural fruits—discord and confusion—we shall endeavor to exemplify by facts the truth of our position.

SCHISMS IN THE SOCIETY.

“Schism,” according to Webster, “is a separation, a breach of unity among people of the same religious faith.” I am thus particular, because there is a party that has denied that there has been a division in the the Society, and they also have called in question its schisms,* though in common minds both are beyond contradiction.

The history of the Society shows that, from the time of its first extended hierarchy, it has been subject to schisms and internal difficulties. Whatever the immediate and exciting causes may have been,

*See the evidence of Samuel Bettle at the trial at Steubenville. See, also, the works of Joseph Gurney Bevan.

we cannot evade the conclusion that they have arisen from a defective organization, from a Discipline not adapted to the principles of human nature.

The first open schism of which we have an account was that of John Perot and his followers. The principal charge against Perot was, that he kept his hat on in time of public prayer, to which was added some minor offences, such as letting his beard grow, and writing some letters without affixing his surname.

Here is presented a curious anomaly. The Society objected to singing psalms in their meetings, on the ground that "all could not in truth sing the same song; some would be likely to be unqualified." Yet it was made an offence for which men were separated from the Society, that they refused to make the outward manifestation of joining in prayer—for which a whole meeting was likely to be still less qualified.

At a period of great public excitement, when there had been many eccentricities among Friends that might be deemed unjustifiable, it was no doubt felt imperative to resist any innovations upon the established order, and herein some may find an apology for the proceedings toward John Perot. Yet, viewed in a dispassionate manner, without reference to those excitements, when all the parties thereto have passed away, it appears to have been among the most arbitrary proceedings that ever took place in the Society. Friends had a very just scruple against uncovering the head as a mark of respect to men; they who did so were considered offenders. In this case they were

made offenders and disowned for *not* uncovering the head at a prayer, the force of which they might not feel, and the words of which might not be adapted to them.

Man, by the constitution of his nature, is a prayerful being. We suppose that each individual soul is inspired by the feeling that there is a Supreme Good. When men speak of progress and improvement, they acknowledge that there is an excellence not yet attained. Man pays homage to this Power in a thousand ways. His prayers may be selfish, but they are according to the state he is in, and they may sometimes be the breathings of a pure spirit, rather of praise and thanksgiving than of prayer. Hagar, when in the wilderness, made this emphatic appeal, "Thou God seest me."

So varied are the states and feelings of men's minds; and yet the Society of Friends have heretofore required uniformity from all. We believe the Hicksite division of the Society have ceased to consider this an offence. We have seen several at a time sitting in their meetings in time of public prayer. It was not supposed to express disapprobation of the prayer, nor did it occasion any confusion. We have seen in the public assemblies of other Societies, some standing, some sitting, some kneeling, without confusion or any idea of disrespect. We can only regard the proceedings of Friends in the case alluded to, as a direct violation of their principles.

The next schism arose from an avowed dissatisfaction with the Discipline. Those objections which had existed from its first establishment, openly manifested themselves in different parts of England. This

schism occasioned much writing and speaking, and many protracted meetings. Some of the best men in the Society joined in it, alleging that the Discipline was a work of supererogation ; that they had lived in love and unity without such regulations. The Orthodox party finally prevailed ; but for many years there were valuable Friends who disapproved of the Discipline, and for more than half a century there were those who refused to be present at the inquisitorial part of the business ; and in some meetings answering the queries was deferred until all other business was attended to, in order to give such persons an opportunity to retire.

Some of the abettors of this movement became so abusive, and put themselves so manifestly in the wrong, that the real nature and ground of their dissatisfaction was lost sight of.

Wilkinson and Story, both preachers, were the two prominent men in this schism. They were of irreproachable character ; and though the meeting disowned them, there is no evidence of a want of correctness in their views. These Friends were particularly dissatisfied with Robert Barclay's work on church government, and the author was required to make an explanation, which he did in a lame and feeble manner.

The arbitrary proceedings of the Society were particularly manifested in this affair. William Rogers, an eminent merchant of Bristol, wrote an account of his scruples and dissatisfaction, for which he was required to make an apology. Another Friend who printed the work, made an acknowledgement to the

meeting also; a third who sold the book refused to make the acknowledgment of having done wrong, and was disowned. Thus was established at this early period, that severe, and, as we deem, unwarrantable censorship over the press, to which we have before alluded.

A man of sane mind would hardly propose to form a society without discipline; such could not exist; and the question with Wilkinson and Story was, whether those rules and regulations which had grown up spontaneously in the individual meetings, were not of a more Christian character and better suited to the profession of Friends than an extended church hierarchy, comparable to that of the Episcopal, Presbyterian, or the Romish church.

The contention arising out of this schism was long continued, and gave Friends much trouble. It finally merged in doctrines which, we believe, made no part of the original dispute.

The third schism was that of George Keith, and appears to have originated in doctrines. Keith was joined by some able men in Pennsylvania, but from his conduct it was clear that he was a contentious and unyielding man. He never had much idea of the Society of Friends. He was charged with being a Unitarian, a Christ, because he said, "I am in him, and he is in me." He knew but one God, and that was within. He said, "I am in him, and he is in me." Governor, Wil-

liam Stockdale, an ancient minister, and others, spoke to the same effect.* The doctrine of spiritualism was evidently the prevailing doctrine in the meeting in Philadelphia on this occasion. Friends alleged that their faith in Christ was according to Scripture. Keith replied that their proposing to give their confession of faith in the words of Scripture, amounted to nothing, seeing that they gave to Scripture their own interpretation. The contest was very earnest and long continued, giving rise to many publications on both sides.

The title of one of Keith's works was, "The Deism of William Penn and his friends, destructive to the Christian Religion." It is evident that what was Orthodox in Pennsylvania in the days of George Keith, was deemed heresy by the party termed Orthodox at the time of the Hicksite separation. Keith complained of the great inconsistency of Quaker magistrates issuing orders to armed vessels to capture some pirates who at that time came into the Delaware. These magistrates, some of whom were ministers, made a distinction between acting as Quakers and as Magistrates. There was crimination and recrimination in no measured terms; finally, Keith and some of his adherents were imprisoned on a charge of speaking disrespectfully of the magistrates. These proceedings form the darkest page in the early civil history of Pennsylvania.

I think it is evident that this schism never could have occurred, but from dissatisfaction with the organization among Friends. There were those who were

* See Works of George Keith.

willing to embrace every opportunity to oppose the undue influence of particular classes in the Society.

The fourth considerable schism was that of the Free Quakers, at the time of the American Revolution, when many were disowned who advocated defensive war.

The gospel spirit of non-resistance is a chimera, when taken in connexion with civil or religious organisation. Those who join in Societies must take them with all their necessary consequences.

If men are perfect, there is no longer need of a government of outward laws. If they are imperfect, there must be a power to restrain them, or society comes to an end. The Quakers have always, of necessity, acted upon this principle, and there is no evading it, so long as they form a Society.

The Society of Friends would have saved themselves much embarrassment, if they had been satisfied to be what they really were, instead of professing to be what they were not. William Penn, by the Charter of Pennsylvania, was made Captain General under the British Crown, and he accepted the trust: without it he could not have carried on the Government. For many years the highest places in the Colony were filled by eminent Quakers; thus they became deputy military officers.

The error was, in Friends making a profession that could not be sustained. James Logan, a member of the Society, on whom much of the management of the affairs of the province had for many years devolved, addressed a letter to the Yearly Meeting, avowing his sentiments in favor of defensive war, and asking its interference to prevent members

of Society, opposed to self-defence, from becoming members of the Provincial Assembly, as he thought them unable to carry on the Government; he describes the embarrassment William Penn himself felt, in acting as Chief Magistrate, and said he had determined to act by deputy as if he had returned to the country.

In two addresses to the Legislature, Penn advises compliance with the Queen's request, by making appropriations for the erection of fortifications on the frontier.* Logan says, "before he himself accepted the trusts he held in the province, he had well considered the nature of government, and saw clearly that it was founded on force. He was consistent in advocating defensive war. Penn was inconsistent in making a profession that he could not sustain.

Thus the two most eminent men in the province avowed their inability to carry into effect a rule of the Society of which they were members.

The error was in the Society undertaking to interfere with private judgment. If Penn had returned to America and carried out his plan of acting by deputy, we do not perceive how the difficulty would have been obviated.

In an address to the Council of officers by George Fox, he says: "Had you been faithful to the power of the Lord God which first carried you on, you would have gone into the midst of Spain to require the blood of the innocent; * * * you would have knocked at Rome's gate, and demanded the Pope himself to offer up all his torture houses, his racks and inquisitions, which you would have found as black as

* Penn's Works, folio, 1st vol., p. 146.

Hell. * * * But many valiant captains, soldiers and officers, have been put out of the army because of their faithfulness to the Lord ; it may be for saying 'thou' to a single person, or for wearing their hats. Oh ! how are men fallen from that which they were in at first, when thousands of us went in the front of you, and were with you in the greatest heat."*

Edward Burrough says : "The Lord hath owned and honored the English army, and done good things for them, and by them, in this nation and age." He also says to the officers and soldiers : " He will honor you as his workmen, if you be faithful to him, and walk in his council and wisdom ;" and he desires them, that they " may not rest and give ease to the flesh, until they have visited Rome and enquired after the innocent blood that is buried there, and avenged the blood of the innocent in Spain and Italy."† Isaac Pennington says, that "the present state of things may, and doth require the use of the sword, if it is borne uprightly, and that the Lord will not suffer that Government to want fitting instruments for the managing thereof, who wait on him in his fear, to have the edge of it rightly directed."‡ Barclay says : " We shall not say that war, undertaken on just occasions, is altogether unlawful."§ These are nearly verbatim the words that are used.

* This address may be found at length in the *Picture of Quakerism*. We suppose it is entirely authentic. It only goes to show that Quakerism, as manifested in its early days, was not separated from warlike proceedings.

† See Burrough's Works, 537

‡ Pennington's Works, 323.

§ Barclay's Apology.

It is to be particularly remarked in this connection, as we have said in a former page, that the first movement in that series of events, that led to the Revolutionary war, was made by Samuel Jennings, a minister in the Society, and his friends, who state that they expected a combat, and were determined to resist the arbitrary imposition of taxes on entering the Delaware, as being taxation without representation, and therefore contrary to the British Constitution.*

The Society of Friends have never been a non-resistant society. All their property is held by the power of the sword; their deeds and title papers are acknowledged before a magistrate, in order to place them under the protection of the law, sustained by the military force of the country, and yet they disown a man for paying a militia fine. They use the magistrate's sword to preserve order; others use their own; there may be a material difference in results, but they rest on the same foundation.

Yet the part the Society have taken in favor of peace, is entitled to respect. A careful consideration of this subject must, we think, lead to the opinion, as we have said on a former page, that there is in the principles of peace, a power the world knows not of, a strength of moral courage which is in itself victory. This is individual in its operation, and not to be obtained by a law of a Society forbidding its members to partake in or encourage war and bloodshed. Those who are clear of the tendencies that lead to war, are peaceable men, and none others are. We have ad-

* See Proud's History of Pennsylvania.

verted to some remarkable instances of the benefit arising from the doctrine of Friends, on this subject, imperfectly as it was carried out by the masses; yet we are not prepared to believe that the testimony against war has gained anything by the rigid discipline in regard to it. The Society has, no doubt, acted faithfully upon this subject according to the state it was in: but while it claimed the right of using force, where it deemed it necessary, we ask, whether it was consistent to condemn individuals for carrying the principle of resistance somewhat further than was thought proper for its own government. Friends, in reference to this subject, quote the text, "resist not evil;" it must be evident to the most transient observer, that this text is a dead letter as respects the Society. We are not aware that we have ever seen one individual who acted out this doctrine. It is certain that it is not adapted to our present state; and to attempt to carry it into effect, without the mind being prepared for it, can only lead to evil. We have referred to some beautiful exemplifications of the powerful influence of the principles of peace; but we confess that we do not know to what end its literal construction might lead. We have continually witnessed the Society defending its reputation against attacks, and the best individuals bolting their doors and taking such measures as are deemed prudent, to resist evil, thus practically rejecting the doctrine in question.

We are not arguing in favor of war, but against an attempt to establish a standard upon a subject so delicate and difficult.

The principle of peace operates individually, bringing its own support. It was under the power which this principle gave, that Friends were enabled to settle New Jersey and Pennsylvania, surrounded by warlike tribes of Indians, but it is a contradiction in terms, to speak of a non-resistant Society; the ultimate resort of all Societies being force.

The world furnishes some very curious facts of the influence of the peaceable principle in particular cases, where individuals have passed unharmed through scenes of the greatest exposure. They deserve careful consideration, as manifesting influences and sympathies that are not generally recognized. The members of the Society of Friends have not been wanting in these. There are also some singular records of Quaker prowess.

It is a historical fact, that the reduction of the French settlements on the Senegal, in the year 1758, was affected by Thomas Cumming, a Quaker. He avowed to the British Ministry his aversion to the shedding of human blood, and expressed his opinion that the French would surrender; that if he believed otherwise, he would have nothing to do with the expedition. He said that let the consequences be what it might, the sect should not be charged with what was his own act.

This was the first successful enterprize of the war, and it is stated to have been a military expedition carried on according to the pacific principles of the Quakers, without the loss of a drop of blood on either side.*

* Smollet—See Graham's Colonial History, note 16, vol. iii.

There is a circumstance related of a ship master and his mate, both Quakers, capturing a company of Turkish pirates, more than double the number of the ship's crew, fully armed, not only without arms themselves, but renouncing every idea of personal violence.

They took them into Majorca and refused offers of large sums of money for them. The clamour of the Spaniards was so great at the idea of their being set free, that they were obliged to ask the Turks to assist in navigating the vessel out of port. In despite of every calculation of human prudence, they took them to the neighborhood of Algiers, landed them safely, gave them their arms, provisions for their journey, and brought the ship safely into the Thames. The transaction was so remarkable, that the King himself came alongside the ship to know the real history of the case. After hearing it, he said, "you have done like a fool; you might have had good gain from them; you should have brought the Turks to me." The reply was, "I thought it better for them to be in their own country."*

The fifth open schism in the Society was in Ireland, in which some of the best Friends were disowned, in consequence of their dissatisfaction with the Discipline. There were also charges made by the Orthodox, of their being tinctured with Socinian or Unitarian doctrine. In carefully reviewing the account that is preserved of this dispute, we consider it a lasting disgrace to European Quakerism, that it should have countenanced these disownments. The ground of the

* See Sewell's History, edition 1728, page 382.

whole difficulty was the attempt to decide what faith their members should have, and to deny the right of private judgment. Those disowned appear to have been amongst the most excellent men in the country; men of whom any society might be proud, if it were proud of any thing. Their excellence was the result of independence of thought and feeling, and yet for this they were made offenders, and denied the right of membership. We wonder not that many estimable Friends declined being any longer members of a society so arbitrary and unreasonable. The narrative of this schism is worthy of an attentive perusal. For publishing an account of it, William Rathbone, one of the most respectable men in England, was disowned. We do not pretend to endorse their doctrine; with this we have nothing to do; but so far as we can judge, it was sustained by the early records of Quakerism; but whether it was or not, the broad principle of the right of private judgment ought to have protected them while their lives were blameless.

The sixth schism was that of Elias Hicks and his friends, and which it was supposed embraced a majority of the Society in America.

This separation was by some believed to have originated in doctrines, and the Hicksites, or Friends, as they termed themselves, in opposition to those called Orthodox, gave some sanction to this idea; but the real difficulty was, the arbitrary endeavors of the Elders, and a few others of the Philadelphia Friends, to make every thing in the Society bend to their views. This had given increasing dissatisfaction for many years—and we believe the crisis would not have been long delayed, even if Elias Hicks had not

appeared among them. He was the ostensible, but not the real cause of the difficulty. This is apparent to those who know the fact, that he was not in Philadelphia at the time the Yearly Meeting separated, which led the way to all that followed, and that he was opposed to the proceeding. The active promoters of the separation were the English Friends, who were travelling in this country, and it is chargeable to an organization which gives to a small minority the power to control the proceedings of the Society. John Comly, the clerk of the Yearly Meeting, appointed by the Orthodox themselves, an approved minister of the Society, a man of remarkable stayedness of character, never we believe suspected of unsound doctrine, and of unimpeachable integrity, was the principal agent in effecting the separation. He plainly expressed his opinion that this orthodox spirit was destroying the Society, and that the only means of averting the catastrophe was a peaceable separation; in these views a large majority of Friends united, men who were then, and always, beyond suspicion as to soundness of faith and purity of life.

We have, on a former page, spoken of the excellent moral character of those men of the Orthodox party who were the principal actors in this schism. It now becomes our proper duty to speak of Elias Hicks and his friends. We were personally acquainted with all the Elders who opposed Elias Hicks. We were also personally acquainted with him, and we are able to say, without fear of contradiction, that he was not inferior to the best of them. Calm, dignified, and self-possessed, correct, even to rigidity, in his morals, simple and unostentatious, he was one of the purest

specimens of the genuine Quaker that it has ever been our lot to know. Not free, by any means, from the superstitions and peculiarities of Friends, often severe upon the weaknesses and vices of society, he yet, from his unostentatious and simple demeanor, and active benevolence, commanded general respect.

Great injustice has been done to Elias Hicks ; and it has had the more influence from the high character of those who opposed him.

The original difficulty with Hicks is supposed to have arisen from the opposition which he made to an idea, which it is believed originated in London, of having a uniformity in the Disciplines of the various Yearly Meetings. Thus creating in effect a higher oligarchy, which was to govern all.

This plan was assented to by the oligarchy in Philadelphia. Hicks opposed it, and from that moment he became an object of suspicion ; prejudices were excited against him, and after an acceptable public ministry of nearly half a century, it was discovered that he preached unsound doctrine.

My impression is, that his views were entirely in accordance with the spiritual views which the Society of Friends held from their first organization ; that they corresponded with the doctrines publicly expressed by the Quakers in Philadelphia at the time of George Keith, and with those of the American Friends generally.

The ancient Quaker doctrines respecting the Trinity, and the doctrine of Christ, as we have before stated, was evidently elicited by the contentions of the day.

I again refer to the letter from Penn to Fox, to be found in Clarkson's life of Penn. The embarrassment of early Friends respecting the doctrine of Christ, is therein fully manifested. Penn says: "If we had answered nothing, we had gratified the enemy, stumbled the moderate, and grieved Friends. If we had answered no, (that the manhood was not a part of Christ) we had been lost. If we had answered in the terms of the question, we had taken Christ into parts. Whereas, I cried twice to them "Christ is not to be divided." Yet it appears Friends finally consented to this division into parts.

This plainly shows how undecided the doctrine of early Friends was on this subject.

The terms made use of by the early Quakers, were ambiguous, equivocal, and indefinite. They meant something, or nothing, according to the explanations that were given to them; and Friends explained them to suit their own purposes. Elias Hicks, we think with great truth and propriety, rejected these modes of expression.

If it is Deism to believe that the flesh and bones of Jesus were not in reality the Saviour of men and the Son of God, then was Elias Hicks a deist. If an unshaken belief in Divine Revelation inwardly manifested, is Christianity, then was Elias Hicks a Christian.

We may further add, that his views respecting the Scriptures, we believe, corresponded with those of the early Quakers. Estimated by that standard they are entirely sound, but weighed by the English standard they are unsound. Hicks never would have assented to the term "written revelation," as used by the London Yearly Meeting of the present

year. It was made a serious charge against him that he asserted that men could not believe what they did not understand.

The accepted Quaker doctrine that men can only understand the Scriptures by the influence of the spirit that gave them forth, fully admits the truth of the assertion; and it is demonstrable that we understand natural things only by analogy to corresponding things that we fully comprehend.

This much is due to the character of an injured man; and yet we heard, within a few days, one of the eminent Orthodox Quaker preachers say, that Elias Hicks stood on the same platform as Thomas Paine, esteemed to be a thorough infidel.

Those designated Hicksites, claimed to be the true Society, and that the term Friends belonged peculiarly to them, because they believed they represented more truly the faith that the American Quakers had always maintained, and they also knew that they were by far the larger number. In some Monthly Meetings there were but few individuals who took the Orthodox side in the controversey,—in the large Monthly Meeting at Makefield, we believe but two families, yet these went through the form of disowning all the others. Who, under such circumstances, are best entitled to be considered Makefield Monthly Meeting?

I have thus endeavored to give an impartial account of the Hicksite schism, the most formidable that has ever occurred in the Society, and the end is not yet.

There are, at this time, separate organizations of Gurneyite and Wilburite Quakers, and ultra aboli-

tionists. A Yearly Meeting in Michigan has discontinued what are termed select meetings; another in New York State has made still further innovations, and established the independent principle. In England there are the Beaconites and other classifications. No part of the Society is free from schism. In addition to these, which have been the most remarkable, there have been many local difficulties, and much individual dissatisfaction; most of which is to be traced to the organization of the Society.

There is harmony even in things so apparently discordant. These schisms are the natural outpourings of that discontent which has so long been felt in the Society; and that they should produce fruit according to their kind, is consistent with the immutable laws of that Providence with whom are the issues of life.

In each case of schism the most ungenerous aspersions were cast on those who differed from the powers that ruled in the Society. Perot was said to have an aspiring mind, and a charge was made against him, that he thought himself further enlightened than George Fox and his friends.

The same hackneyed terms have been used down to the present day. Whatever those men may have been, these charges, coming from persons pledged to a particular system, are entitled to no respect.

We have adverted to many noble acts of Fox and Penn, but it is doing them no discredit to suppose that others may have been in advance of them in particular instances.

The school boy of the present day understands mathematics better than Isaac Newton, and though

the integrity of the present may not be in advance of the past, yet the systems of Fox and Penn were but systems, liable to be done away or improved by subsequent generations, and we have no doubt that many modern Quakers have a better comprehension of these things than those of former times.

The Hicksite schism has been peculiarly called "a tremendous heresy." Christianity was called "heresy" by the Jews. Paul says: "After the manner ye call heresy, so worship I the God of my Fathers." Prelacy is heresy to Popery, Quakerism to Prelacy, and Hicksism to Orthodoxy. A clergyman in New York speaking of Quakerism generally, says: A more ruinous heresy to the souls of men could scarcely be invented by the great sire of heresy than Quakerism." "The Quakers in their belief, have been cardinal heretics from the beginning."*

We recognize no heresy but disobedience to the Divine law.

There can be no other heresy to those who believe in the great truth, that Christianity is a principle of the mind, immutable and unchangeable.

The course the Society has pursued, has been, as a matter of policy, most injudicious; as a matter of principle, still worse. They have pleaded for liberty of conscience to all men, but have denied it to their own members. The effect is apparent.

In the early days of the Society, meetings were established in Poland, in Germany, in Holland, and in the West Indies. There was one in Algiers in Africa. These, it is believed, are all extinct. In many parts of England, Ireland, and Scotland, houses

* Cox on Quakerism.

once overflowing with members, are now nearly vacant. There was a list made out, about half a century ago, of seventy meetings, the members of no one of which amounted to five families. At a Half-Yearly Meeting in Wales, there were but three women. At a Monthly Meeting, there were but fourteen females; at another, ten; at a third, five. The meeting of Montrose, consisted of an old woman of eighty, her daughter of sixty years old, and not another member. Things appear to be still worse now. The British government directed that a census should be taken of the number of individuals in attendance at the various places of worship in that country, on the 30th of March, the present year. The returns showed that there were 348 meeting-houses belonging to Friends, and that on that day, (being First day,) the average attendance, members and professors, was 39 at each house. There were only 31 meetings at which over 100 persons attended on First day morning.

On this continent many of our country meetings are poorly maintained; the young people, the hope of a succeeding generation, have no interest in them; many of them cannot be persuaded to attend them.

Barelay, in his work on church government, says; "the good fruits that abound to the household of faith, is a certain evidence that they have been led by the hand of the Lord in the establishment of this government, which will yet more and more appear." He also says, "through our faithful testimony in the hand of the Lord, that anti-christian and apostatized generation, the national ministry, hath received a deadly blow, by our discovering, and witnessing against their forced maintenance and lites."

Where is to be found the fulfilment of these assumptions? The national ministry remains undisturbed in all its power and influence.

Pursuing a parity of reasoning, may we not say, that the schisms and disorders to which we have referred, are a "certain evidence" that this church government which he advocates has, after full experience, been found not to be adapted to the present state of society? We venture an opinion that his work on the subject, from which we quote, was one of the causes of the failure of his prediction. This work has been reprinted within a few years to justify the arbitrary proceedings of the Orthodox Friends toward those they term Hicksites. It is by no means improbable that it may be again republished by the Hicksites themselves, to justify their proceedings toward the Congregationalists or some other class of Society, from whom they may happen to differ. He says, "the thing in hand to be proved," was that Jesus Christ intended there should be order in his church. It seems not to have occurred to his mind, "that where the church of Christ is, there is order;" that it produces fruit according to its kind, as the oak produces the acorn and the apple tree its natural fruit. Where government exists it must be sustained; but its strongest element is the harmony of its parts. There is no true conservatism but truth. This applies as well to governments as to individuals.

The commotions that are observed in all portions of the Society, indicate a thirst after a better state of things. They are effecting their purpose in their own way. The Society may be destroyed under their influence. If it be so, it will be from the effect of

that reverence for the past, which opposes such changes, as the feelings of the present age demands. Every contest with the crown in Great Britain, for hundreds of years, has resulted in enlarged liberty to the people. Happy would it have been for the Society of Friends, if the schisms to which I have alluded had produced a similar effect—but until the difficulty with Elias Hicks, the Orthodox party were always able to crush those they called disorganizers, and thus they went on sowing the seed of future discord.

Where there is most intelligence and liberty for free enquiry, these schisms are most likely to occur. Free enquiry which strengthens systems founded in truth, tends also to destroy error. The conservative will of course, mourn and lament. Man often weeps when he might rejoice, and rejoices when he might rather weep.

SUGGESTIONS AS TO A REMEDY.

It has become a watchword in the various divisions of the Society, that in order to remedy the evils that exist, Friends must return to first principles; hence it becomes important to ascertain what the first principles of the Society are. It is evident that there are first principles for everything, as well in moral as in physical affairs; the laws of mechanics, mathematics, chemistry, &c., are the first principles by which they are respectively governed, and they can be traced to no other ultimate source than the

divine mind and they are perfect in their kind. Man searches them out, but he has no power to change them. In moral affairs, free agency seems to be an attribute of our nature, and man forms for himself the principles by which he is to be governed. Despotism, Democracy, Papacy, Prelacy, Methodism or Quakerism are founded upon the principles of individual men combined for those purposes, and they necessarily assume a character corresponding therewith. With despotism comes power; without this, it is void. With democracy, equal rights. A careful consideration of our moral existence will show, that the harmonious action of any system depends upon the harmony of its individual parts.

By a law of God that appears unchangeable, not only all physical things, but moral principles also, bring forth fruit according to their kind. We have said on a former page, if we desire peace let us lay peaceable foundations.

The greatest difficulties that occurred in the colony of Pennsylvania, were the result of the feudal tenures or proprietary rights of the Penn family, in contradiction to the elementary democracy of its constitution. Like difficulties are occurring in the state of New York, feudal tenures engrafted on democracy. In our general government we have a broad declaration of equal rights, and an attempt to reconcile with it a system of slavery. This is shaking the country to the centre. If we pass to the European world, we shall find other inconsistencies; hence are required despotisms and standing armies to preserve peace.

We propose to make the application of these principles to the Society of Friends. Neither that Socie-

ty nor any other, nor any combination of men, form an exception to this law. Human effort can effect no change in it. It is under this conviction that we come to the inquiry, what are the primary principles of the Society? We have fully adverted to them before, but it is needful to recapitulate in order to a full understanding of our subject.

To minds that are disposed calmly to consider truth, we think there need be no difficulty in answering our questions.

The fundamental principle of the Society of Friends is described in the following language. "Our religion stands in a principle, which changeth the mind." The second is like unto it, and necessarily connected with it, that this principle furnishes an evidence of truth and duty, and that men ought to be obedient thereto. Connected with both is liberty of conscience and the right of private judgment. A principle and the conviction of the necessity of obedience to it, would be void without individual liberty to be governed thereby. These contain but one principle, a deep philosophical truth, and this constitutes the creed of the Society of Friends, if creed it can be called.

These primary principles are the platform on which Quakerism was originally founded. Not on the Scriptures, but the spirit which gave forth all the truth and excellence that they contain. Not on individual righteousness, but on the spirit whence, as its natural fruit, righteousness proceeds. Not on Christ as a body of flesh and blood, but on Christ the wisdom of God and the power of God. Not on peace, for many of the early Quakers were in the

army. Not on the attendance of meetings, not on dress or language. All these things may or may not be incidental to the state of particular minds.

This fundamental principle has been again and again violated by the Society of Friends; their system itself is a palpable and direct denial of their first or primary principle. It is denied when they attempt to coerce individuals to rise and uncover the head in the time of public prayer contrary to their own sense of right. It is denied when they attempt to prescribe a faith for their members. It is denied when they interfere with dress, and in those various cases of the exercise of the discipline to which we have referred.

It may be asked whether these are not proper objects for the care of a religious society?

The primary question is, are fundamental principles to be departed from? We answer no! To disregard them necessarily leads to confusion.

The remedy we propose is a very simple one, a *return to first principles*. If the members of the Society of Friends are prepared to change those principles, to adopt the Calvinistic idea of original sin, or the supremacy of the Scriptures; or with the Papists say, that a holy conclave shall be the interpreter of spiritual influences, then let every thing correspond thereto. We think they are not ready for any of these changes, and hence we say that the system should be made to correspond with those feelings that are well established in the minds of Friends, and then we shall do all that can be done to restore harmony to the Society. We may be told that George Fox, Wm. Penn and others introduced the idea of a Trinity, of

a particular faith, or a precise Discipline. We then repeat that these early Quakers themselves have done more than all besides to subvert their own principles. It changes in no respect our position, even were we to admit that every individual united in the doctrines that have been ascribed to them by the Orthodox Yearly Meetings. We should only the more earnestly say that they endeavored to establish contradictions from which harmony could not come. We do not make such an admission; they were essentially spiritualists.

There is another principle, fundamental to the democratic element of government, and that is the right of the majority to rule; this idea, imperfectly acknowledged among Friends, is practically void. It should be carried into effect in its full force and vigor. If we have a democracy, let it be true to its own nature, and there will be no discord. We desire that our premises should be carefully examined; because if they are true, our conclusions follow as a natural consequence. We believe we have been entirely correct in stating the primary principle of the Society. We have treated of it more at length in our early pages, and we repeat our deep conviction that no sophistry can change it, no human ingenuity evade its truth.

If, then, our conclusions are true, the superstructure should be made to harmonise therewith, and inasmuch as it may deviate therefrom, it may be considered false. We say, then, that Friends should change their fundamental principles, or carry them out.

We are aware that every evil to the Society will be predicted from the changes which we suggest; the only difficulty that we foresee, is that the minds of

Friends are not prepared to adopt them. If men are warriors, they will work according to their own feelings ; it does not thence follow that there is not a state of peace.

We propose, first, that the Society has no right to interfere with the individual faith of its members, as being entirely inconsistent with its primary element. On this point we shall state our views.

All men are, without exception, to a certain extent, Christians. There is, as we have said, every where an under current of spiritualism, and it is this which unites them in a common brotherhood.

There probably are not any two individuals who agree in all points of doctrine. Are we to reject all who differ from us, and stand alone in the world ? or where is the line of distinction ?

Some reject the Atheist, some the Deist ; the different divisions of Quakers reject each other. These prejudices, and alienations are alike in their nature ; they injure those who indulge in them. A religious life has no necessary connection with speculative opinions, and the Atheist and the Christian may harmonize together in the good that is in each.

There have been a few who, in the pride of opinion, have said "there is no God." Yet all seem to believe in truth, and we have reason to suppose that this professed disbelief is to the absurd ideas that are attached to the name and attributes of the Most High.

Many ancient philosophers of the purest lives were termed Atheists, because they did not believe in the heathen mythology.

Justin Martyr, the most eminent of the Apostolic Fathers, left this testimony, "That Atheists and Barbarians, having the true spirit, were Christians, without regard to their speculative opinions," and this, more than his martyrdom, furnishes evidence of his deep religious feeling and enlightened Christianity. Like observations would apply to skepticism of all kinds. Justin Martyr was greatly in advance of the early Quakers in this particular.

We certainly believe that it is weakness and not strength that is so sensitive to difference of opinion. Wm. Penn wrote thus in his "Letter to the Council and Senate of Embden: "The different persuasions of men about things relating to another life can in no ways render them unfit for this."

Religion is an affair between God and each individual soul, and a body of men bearing the character of a religious society has no more right to attempt to control it, than the government of a commonwealth or a kingdom.

It is our belief that the Society of Friends receive their authority to interfere with the faith of their members, from the same source as does the church of Rome, and that it is in both cases a usurpation of inherent rights, conceived in weakness and imbecility; and that it is the essence of a bigoted sectarianism.

Our second proposition is, that no society has a right to interfere with liberty of conscience. Friends' claim this as an inalienable right, and there is abundant evidence to show how earnestly the idea was cherished by early Quakers.

When, in the year 1676, Friends had in New Jersey, for the first time, the power to establish a civil

government, they incorporated this broad principle into their fundamental Law. "No men or number of men upon earth hath power or authority to rule over men's consciences in religious matters; therefore it is ordained, that no persons whatsoever, within the said province, at any time or times hereafter, shall be any ways, upon any pretence whatsoever, called in question or in the least punished or hurt, either in person, estate or privilege, for the sake of his opinion, judgment, faith or worship towards God, in matters of religion."

The Constitution of Pennsylvania, says,—and it is copied from the original frame of Government established by the Quakers,—“No human authority can, in any case whatever, control or interfere with the rights of conscience.”

Our third proposition is, introducing into the Society in its full extent, the democratic element of government.

We are aware of the contrast drawn by the Friends between the voting in the Roman Catholic church and the mode of deciding questions among them; they may be equally wrong when their effect is to concentrate irresponsible power in the hands of a few.

Equal rights, which were deemed so important in the colony founded by Friends, never had an existence in the government of the sect, and yet it is as important in the one case as the other. Innumerable evils have resulted from the neglect of this great idea.

If a majority fairly represented decide any question, the minority are bound to submit or to withdraw. We see exemplified in the State how quietly minorities submit to majorities. This principle would at once

subvert the oligarchy which is incorporated with the present system, which, if not destroyed, will destroy the Society.

Those familiar with history, are fully acquainted with the fact, that church and state have been united in nearly all the governments of the civilized world since the Christian era, and every evil has been predicted from their separation. Yet we have seen them disunited, liberty of conscience introduced, every prophecy in regard to them falsified, and their value enhanced beyond what their most sanguine friends could ever have foreseen. We feel convinced it will be thus in the Society of Friends, whenever its members are prepared to carry out these changes.

If Penn had adopted the idea in forming his government, that liberty of conscience was to be subject to the power of the State, his colony would have been greatly injured. Happily this was not the case. In his colony he adopted the idea that "The best government is that which governs least."

The result is, that in the length and breadth of this commonwealth, there is probably not an intelligent individual to be found, who would desire any important change in the nature of the government. If there are grievances, they are of a minor character, which have no bearing upon the system as a whole. There is no rebellion, no schism, no division; and, so far as we can judge, needful alterations being provided for, there is no prospect of any.

Friends in their Discipline reversed this proposition, seeming to believe that "the best government is that which governs *most*."

The result in this case is that the Society is torn

by schism and dissension, and there is scarcely an intelligent individual in it that does not perceive that there is some screw loose, some link broken that requires to be renewed in order to restore harmony. We may be told that one relates to religious, the other to civil affairs; and there may perhaps be a distinction; but properly considered, every government is a civil government, and can only regulate civil affairs; it cannot read the hearts of men. Righteousness is an individual principle. Any government established on enlightened principles of justice and truth, may be considered a religious government. We impair the beauty and universality of the Christian religion, when we confine it to those things the world calls religious. The religious principle is the all-pervading element of our moral nature. Wherever there is harmony and truth, there is religion, whatever name it may bear.

Religious organizations are but government within governments, wheels within wheels; in all governments each constituent division should harmonize with the others, and thus contribute to the strength of the whole. In the government of this State, as each part is faithfully carried out, the whole is made stronger. This is reversed in systems where there are contradictions. The more individual parts are perfected, the more the system is weakened. Carry the Quaker discipline fully into effect, and you deny the fundamental principles of Quakerism; adhere to it, and you deny the Discipline.

In individual virtue, benevolence and philanthropy, Friends have probably no superiors. Their integrity has sustained the Society under an organiza-

tion that would else, ere this, have destroyed it. An organization to be valuable, should sustain and support integrity, and not be a burthen on it. It requires but little observation of the meetings of business in the Society, to perceive how great a burthen their discipline is upon the real worth and integrity of its members. The reference we have made to the Green Street Yearly Meeting, where perhaps a thousand or more persons, excellent and true men, were detained for hours to consider whether a parent, a husband, or a wife should be allowed to mark by a small stone the spot where the remains of a beloved object reposed, is an instance of this ; not peculiar, for similar manifestations are of constant recurrence. The energies of the Society are wasted in a continual effort to support a system which is not in harmony with its fundamental principle.

We have thus endeavored to show from facts that admit of no dispute, the real state of the Society of Friends at the present moment, the causes which have led to its feebleness and decline, and have suggested what we consider to be the only radical remedy. Friends need expect no permanent peace, until the causes which produce discord are removed ; until that takes place, we do not know that peace is desirable.

Whenever Friends return to their first principles, these will of themselves furnish the means of a permanent reformation. Here we might stop, as it is no part of our design to undertake to build up a society, but rather to state general principles and leave them to be examined by others ; yet as we have our own views with regard to some particular points of the

Discipline, we are willing to express them, aware however, that they may not be adapted to the minds of others.

In the full conviction that the proper object of religious association is to reform and not to cut off, we should curtail, if not abolish altogether, the system of disownment; it is doubtful to us whether it is not false in principle. The worse men are, the more they need the care of their friends. We have seen many disowned, but never yet have seen any good come from it.

We should discontinue the queries; the answers of which have become so formal, that they might almost as well be stereotyped to answer for one generation as for another.

We should abolish the censorship over the press, and allow members to criticise the proceedings of the Society as they see proper. A system may be presumed to be unsound that will not bear the test of the most rigid criticism. We should close those select meetings of all descriptions, that have given so much dissatisfaction; we should dispense with the Book of Discipline, with all those recommendations from Yearly Meetings for hundreds of years, as having performed their mission, and being no longer useful. We would leave dress and language to be regulated by individual minds, as they might see proper. We would reject all idea of interfering with private rights. Abandoning all tests of faith, would break down all barriers between those called Orthodox and others. We doubt the possibility of an erroneous faith upon points that are essential to the salvation of man. We doubt the capacity of the mind to conceive of effect,

without reference to a primary cause. We doubt the power of disbelief of the moral sense or grace of God in the heart. Men may be disobedient to their convictions, but we cannot imagine the great First Cause would have left his work imperfect. An enlightened view of these subjects, should unite the different divisions of the Society.

The most ultra radical doctrines may be found in members of the Orthodox meeting; and among the Hicksites there is orthodoxy enough to satisfy its most strenuous advocate. Now that the chief actors in the schism have passed away, there ought to be no separation.

Our belief is, that let the Society take what form it may, if a discipline contrary to the feeling of the age is to be maintained—if an oligarchy is to have power to suppress every thing it does not approve—if the youth are to be alienated because they do not conform in dress and language to some standard that has been set up in a former age—if excellent men are to be disowned for infringing laws which carry no conviction of their utility to the mind, then indeed there seems no hope for the Society. Through the integrity of its individual members, its wealth and influence, it may linger out a feeble and protracted existence; but no extensive benefit to the world, no vivifying influence to the cause of truth, can be expected from it.

We would abandon at once and forever all compulsion in the cause of religion. We readily admit there is much truth and beauty in many of the Quaker views; but why attempt to enforce a compliance with them?

The system we advocate will be compared to a rope of sand, which cannot hold together. It is so as respects human enactments. It would substitute the law of sympathy for the law of force, and place the Society of Friends on the only ground on which we think it can ever stand consistently with its primary principle of individuality.

If this cannot be, at least in part, accomplished, then we yield up all hope of a permanent and substantial reformation in the Society of Friends.

In attempting to form an organization on the Quaker platform, we are immediately met with the difficulty to which we have referred, that organization implies sovereignty; sovereignty, government; and the primary principle of Friends inculcates individualism. The early Quakers thought they had found a narrow pathway between the opposing principles, but they failed in the attempt, mainly because they denied their members the right of private judgment. We believe with this, these seemingly opposing propositions may harmonize.

The feelings of the age are in favor of religious societies; the world delights in symbolic worship, and though we admit that government must be sustained, and order preserved, we yet deny the necessity of that complicated machinery with which the Society is at present encumbered.

The religious meetings of Friends are greatly in advance of those of any other Society. All these assemblies are highly social in their character, foster and keep alive the kindlier feelings of human nature, and as gatherings devoted to mutual improvement, and standing on their proper footing, are not only

unexceptionable, but praiseworthy. But we deny the authority of any man or set of men to enforce the attendance of such meetings. It would seem to be as reasonable for those who stay away from them to censure those who go, as the reverse. Religious meetings are not necessarily connected with a religious life; the worst men may frequent them, and the best absent themselves from them.

Man can no more worship by appointment than he can pray by appointment. We cannot even define what social or public worship is. Man worships God by doing his duty, let that be what it may; perhaps as much in staying from, as in going to meeting. As he is united with the Divine harmony, he necessarily worships God every where without regard to time or place.

There is evidence that true devotion springs up spontaneously in every mind. The homage that is so generally paid to truth is proof of this. It is not the offspring of churches or of religious communities of any kind; divest these of all mystery and leave them to stand on their proper footing, and then only can their real value be properly appreciated.

Was the intelligence of Friends in proportion to their integrity, we think they would at once perceive the necessity of changes, corresponding in some degree to the feelings of the age. The circumstances of Friends have materially changed in a hundred years; the American government has been changed, and the feelings and habits of society have changed.

Their common sufferings formed a bond of union to the early Quakers; it had the effect of lessening the influences of minor differences, as the greater

naturally absorbs the lesser evil, compassion for their accumulated wrongs drew many to them, and the Society rapidly increased. All this was unfavorable to that calmness essential to the formation of rules of government for a religious society.

Since that period, in Pennsylvania, every thing has favored Friends. For a long time they controlled the government; they have had wealth and influence and respectability, yet there being nothing to absorb the inharmonious tendencies of the system, the Society has almost as rapidly declined.

Are then prisons and persecutions needful to the preservation of the present Quaker system? We think they are. A general persecution would tend to unite Friends, yet it would remedy no evil; and when removed, they would remain to produce their natural fruit.

Every effort to promote harmony has failed,—increase of discipline and innumerable advices both public and private,—whilst those Friends who have put forth these advices, who have been esteemed most religious and exemplary, have been most active in these contentions and schisms.

What then remains to be done, but to return to first principles as a means of making such changes as are required?

While we are now writing, after many alienations, feuds and dissensions, almost unto blows, two divisions of the professed Orthodox portion of the Society the Gurneyites and Wilburites, as if in mockery of their professions of peace, are appearing before one of the legal tribunals of New England, asking that it, supported by swords and bayonets, shall settle dif-

ferences which they cannot settle themselves; and the individuals who are making this appeal are among the most respectable men of the country. This is but re-enacting scenes that occurred in the middle states between other divisions of the Society.

These men we have no doubt are acting faithfully according to the sectarianism they cherish.

It is a reflection upon human nature that this whole subject cannot be discussed by Orthodox and Hicksite alike with a single eye to truth without regard to their respective prejudices. If these prejudices and preconceived opinions could be removed, we do not believe there would be any difficulty in reorganizing the Society of Friends.

In reference to his system of Laws, Penn says: "I do not find a model in the world that time, place, and some singular emergencies have not necessarily altered."

His system of government was the result of his sense of right, sustained by men as wise as himself. Thus was exhibited the infinite advantage of an independent private judgment. Had Penn, like the Puritans, taken the Mosaic code, or any other code, as his guide, those civil institutions which have been the admiration of the world, would have had no place in the early government of this province.

In a society capacity these Friends undertook to "restore and re-establish upon its right basis the ancient Apostolic order of the Church of Christ."

In the one case they sought to know what was suited to man in his present condition; in the other, they acted by proscription, and required men of their own day to conform to the precepts and usages of a

small body of Christians, who lived sixteen hundred years before, and who acted under different circumstances. This, in a progressive world, can never be done with impunity.

I see no reason why individuals who feel the need of sympathetic communion, should not form societies to meet their own wants, either through affiliated or individual meetings, with large or small associations, as might best suit the feelings of the members. If all should fail, then abandon religious organizations altogether, as being inconsistent with the Christian religion. We think they are not inconsistent, and we would like to see a meeting established in every neighborhood, or a number of them, with few or many members as the case may be, formed in accordance with the principles that ruled in the Society before an extended church hierarchy was ever thought of. There is scarcely a possibility of the same fanaticism that occurred at that period, but even admitting that it should be so again, it is still we think far preferable to a dead formality.

There is a vast number of individuals, some who are members of religious societies, and others who are not, and not a few of those standing on the Quaker platform, who practically carry this voluntary system into effect. They go to meeting or stay away as they think fit; are subject to no sectarian rules; acknowledge no dogmas, and yet in practical virtue they are not inferior to their more Orthodox neighbors.

This class of individuals is probably more numerous in Pennsylvania than all sectarians combined. There is a deep rooted dislike to the assumptions of the

clergy, a want of confidence in the power of sects. Thus there is a great field open for the promulgation of pure Christian truths, we mean spiritualism, not paganism under the name of Christianity. We witness the establishment of various societies to promote particular objects of benevolence. The abolitionists combine many of the purest and most earnest minds in the middle and northern states. There are free meetings, meetings for conference, where much true religious feeling is manifested. We endorse not their peculiar views; but we ask, are not these religious meetings? Every meeting that is held under the best influences of the human mind is a religious meeting. We believe it is easy to form an organization where the government would extend no further than the preservation of a proper decorum in meetings; leaving individuals to attend them or not as they thought right, without becoming offenders.

We think it probable there would be larger meetings on the voluntary principle, than on any other, and that they would have more power in them.

It would furnish to individuals, what they seem to desire, the opportunity of a sympathetic gathering at stated times, where they might take their families, if so inclined, and hear any advice that might be offered, or sit in silence as the case might be. If none chose to attend such meetings, the Society would not necessarily be dissolved or lessened, because it would be founded on a principle not to be effected by these outward incidents.

"'Tis not the coarser tie of human laws,
Unnatural oft, and foreign to the mind,
That binds our peace; but harmony itself,
Attuning all our passions into love."

If, however, it should appear after a full and dispassionate view of the state of Society, that the individual members fairly represented, are not, at present prepared for any change, that its dogmas and discipline are needful for its preservation, we will still adhere to it, and abide our time, because Quakerism has many redeeming points. In regard to liberty of conscience, in its censorship over the press and its exacting Discipline, it is probably behind most others; yet as a whole, we think it superior to any other religious system with which we are acquainted. Take it with all its supposed tendency to formality, to fanaticism and enthusiasm, we still say it is better.

We have spoken fully of its imperfections ; we think them very great ; but withal, the system among Friends combines more common sense, more true philosophy, than all others with which we are acquainted. We know that many young Friends are attracted by the trappings and gew-gaws, and the studied eloquence of a paid ministry ; we say to these young people, "Separate yourselves from all these things."

We write in the full conviction that there may be as much, perhaps more, real religion in other individuals than in the members of the Society of Friends. but in most cases we consider their first principles radically and hopelessly false, and inconsistent with the Christian religion.

Quakerism points to perfection, through the immediate operation of that power which alone is perfect. while in most other systems men are recommended to become copyists through material influences. If this could be fully carried into effect, the world would reproduce characters of the same nature, without pro-

gress, through all succeeding time, according to the law of material things, as man of the present day has essentially the same physical development as Adam or Abraham.

Their systems would destroy all religion, but they cannot be carried out, because of the underlaying spirituality common to the human mind.

The details of the Quaker organization being inconsistent with their primary principle, have produced the errors we have witnessed. Yet the principle itself, having its basis on spiritual influences, we believe to be eternal and unchangeable; while those of Trinitarians and Unitarians, in all their divisions, having their foundation professedly on material influences—on evidence derived through the senses—are necessarily subject to all the vicissitudes of time, and, with this basis, we believe them to be essentially Pagan in their character.* We speak of systems, not of individuals.

We may be told of the consolation many minds derive from these systems. We believe it; they are in accordance with their preconceived opinions, and it is consistent with the state they are in. Thus, also, each division of the Quakers, the Jew and the Musselman, find consolation in their respective faiths. Yet, when analyzed, this consolation is found to be in the

* The late William Allen of London, says: "We want no more theories, no more doctrines to procure the happiness of mankind; we only want men to be *really* Christians; whereas, at present, the great bulk of those who go under the name, are Pagans at heart." See his Life, vol. I, page 489—490.

true Christian principle of spiritualism, the common attribute of sincere minds everywhere, and has nothing to do with dogmas.

Let me not be told that Quakerism is a small idea of plain language, plain clothes, and a narrow-minded Discipline. It is so to those who look no deeper; and they work in their own way, and to their own end, which is discord; but in its true sense, it is an elaborate principle of harmony, which extends to man in every relation in life. It is the only true conservative principle in society.

We have said that Quakerism—we mean not in its limited, but in its extended sense—contains within itself the elements of true democracy. We feel the conviction that no man yet comprehends it, in its fulness. The laws of nature, municipal jurisprudence, moral philosophy in all its parts, the rights of man, are all comprehended in its ample spirit and influence.

We have seen British power yielding to a few despised Quakers; we have seen the value of Quakerism in the early government of Pennsylvania; we have seen its effects in softening the hearts of the savages, and preventing war; we have seen it modifying the judiciary, and reforming prison discipline, and wherever it prevails, producing an increase of moral good.

We are not prepared to believe, that the Quaker mission is ended, but rather that it is yet to prosper under more enlightened auspices.

Edward Burroughs uses this emphatic language: "My confidence is sure that our testimony shall be glorious forever, and that this people shall never be extinguished from being a people."

We have adverted in the early part of these pages, to the extended and enlarged views that he gave to Quakerism. "Moses, a warrior, was a Quaker, so also was David, and Jeremiah, a Jewish prophet;" and whenever Quakerism takes this broad and extended ground, then we think this prophecy will be fulfilled.

If there are stages or steps in the progress of men, as some suppose, if Judaism was a preparation for Christianity, Popery for Protestantism, and this for an age of increased thought and action, then also we may suppose that Quakerism is the proper platform on which still more elevated Christian organizations may be founded; because in its best and truest sense, it is in advance of other religious societies. We think further moral reformation will be effected, either through this people or some other. The restlessness of the Christian world in all its various phases, speaks but one language, that man is seeking for a rest which he has not yet found; and though he may never gain this from outward circumstances, yet there is also a harmony for societies, according to their nature, as full and as perfect as that for individual minds.

The system we advocate is not Hicksism, or Orthodoxy; not Unity, or Trinity; it is Quakerism that is consistent with common sense, with true wisdom and sound philosophy. It is Quakerism freed from its dogmas, and, so far as society can effect it, freed from its sectarianism and narrow mindedness. It would leave to individuals the subject of their own faith, and liberty to explain it. It would leave to each the regulation of his own conduct, with the liberty of recommending to others what he deemed right. It

would carry out the idea that the aid of an organized body is useless and burthensome in all undertakings that can best be accomplished by individual efforts.

Maclaine, the learned translator of Mosheim's Ecclesiastical history, says: "If Quakerism be now in England on a more rational footing than formerly, we may congratulate its members upon the happy change, but at the same time condole with them on the approaching annihilation of their sect; for if reason gets in among them, the spirit—I mean their spirit—will soon be quenched, and fancy being no more the only criterion of truth, the fundamental principle of their existence will be destroyed."

These are the sentiments of a (so called) Doctor of Divinity. Whatever may become of the Quakers as a sect, we believe Quakerism, in its true sense, is not founded on fancy, but on those unchangeable laws of God which admit not an idea of the possibility of annihilation.

It is no paradox to say, that the highest Quakerism is not to be a Quaker, but a participator in the universal harmony of the Divine Law which knows no sect or party.







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